



Tasmanian Adventure

Chasing the World's Cleanest Air

PAGE 72

TRAVELER

NOVEMBER 2012 | NOBODY KNOWS THIS WORLD BETTER

Paris

AND OTHER PLACES THAT
CHANGED OUR LIVES

[8 GREAT WRITERS, 8 GREAT STORIES]

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Sensational Scenery in South Africa

Anyone lucky enough to traverse South Africa will find everything from fields of wildflowers and enchanting woodlands to desert sand dunes that ripple into the horizon. Visit South Africa to experience spectacular cliffs, unblemished preserves, breathtaking beaches—and prepare to be entranced by its dreamy vistas.

Blyde River Canyon in Mpumalanga



The Cederberg Mountains are noted for dramatic rock formations and San rock art.

MAGNIFICENT MOUNTAINS

The **uKhahlamba-Drakensberg** mountain range is the highest in South Africa, towering above caves that house the largest collection of San (or Bushman) paintings. The serene forest is abundant with native plants and offers recreational activities such as fly-fishing, rock climbing, and mountain biking. **Limpopo** is renowned for its impressive mountains, including the **Soutpansberg** and **Waterberg**. Geologically, the rock strata dates back 850 million years, and with the natural beauty of the savannah, and the abundant wildlife, it's a perfect place to revel in the wonders of South Africa.

PHENOMENAL PARKS

Major attractions in the **KwaZulu-Natal** region are the **iSimangaliso Wetland Park** and the **uKhahlamba-Drakensberg**

Park. While both parks are significant for migratory species, they also offer hiking and adventure activities. To the northwest, experience the dazzling sunsets and peace of the **Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park**. It is one of the largest protected natural ecosystems in the world and the best place to see rare black-maned lions.

CAPTIVATING COASTS

The Wild Coast, as its name suggests, is an untamed wilderness, renowned as one of the most beautiful places on the planet due to its dramatic coastline, sheltered bays, and thriving forests. Because it's undeveloped and cannot easily be accessed, if you're looking for solitude, it's a hiker's paradise. Off the coast, snorkeling and diving present spectacular underwater views.

PLEASANT PANORAMAS

With a legendary vista named God's Window, you get a sense of why **Blyde River Canyon** is a remarkable place to visit. This vast canyon is composed of red sandstone and is near the water-eroded **Bourke's Luck Potholes**, where prospectors once searched for gold. **The Eastern Cape**, described as a province of great extremes, stretches from the snowcapped peaks of the southern **Drakensberg** to the rich forests of **Tsitsikamma** and is flanked by the Indian Ocean. The landscape is further enhanced by a colorful assortment of vegetation and bird life. **The Richtersveld** in northwestern **Namaqua National Park** is popular for its arid, Mars-like landscape.

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Amphitheatre, Drakensberg in KwaZulu-Natal

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[NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER]

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The author takes a deep breath of Tasmania, a quirky island far from polluting winds and full of pure Aussie spirit

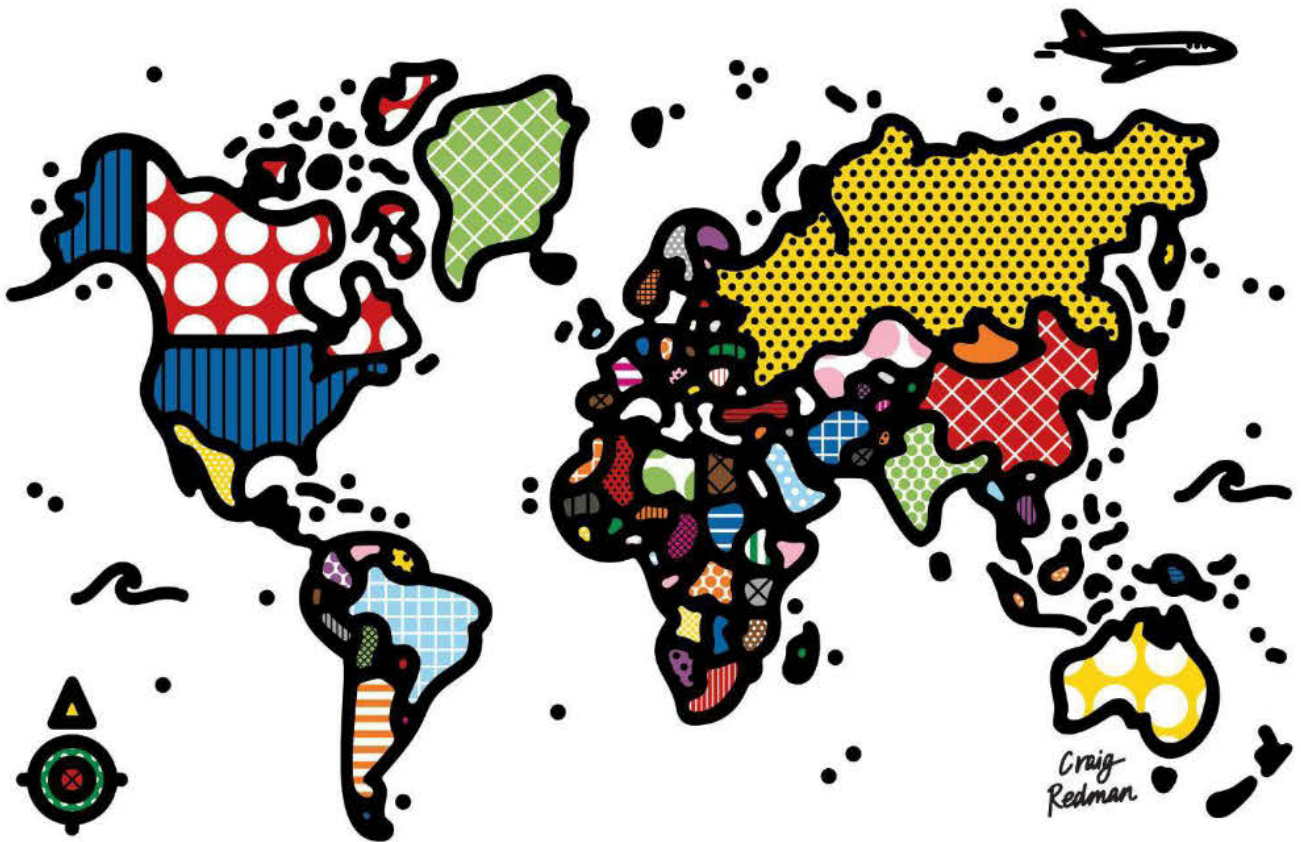
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Photographs by PALANI MOHAN

PALANI MOHAN



Chasing nature's best at Boat Harbour on the northern coast of Tasmania, page 72.

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ON THE COVER: *Paris, France*, by Shaun Egan/Getty Images

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India invites deep reflection, from the gleam of the Taj Mahal to puddles in Shimla (above).

[EDITOR'S NOTE]

In Living Color

ON PAGE 48 A HANDFUL OF WRITERS ruminate on places that have changed their lives. We all have such places. Mine is India, and I've just returned from the latest of many visits there—this time to help launch *Traveler's* 15th international edition. The visit brought back memories of my first trip there, in 2001. I thought I had seen the world. India changed my mind. It is a world unto itself. I traveled from Delhi to Agra to Jaipur to the former British hill station of Shimla, in the Himalaya. The subcontinent taught me to embrace foreignness, and to question my Western biases. I was shocked by its duality: great wealth coexisting with the poverty of hardscrabble millions. I navigated train stations carpeted with slumbering Indians, roads terrifyingly clogged with bumper-car traffic and wandering animals, and cacophonous markets flooded with a river of humanity so thick it took my breath away. India is so stark, so real and in-your-face with its expression of every shade of the human condition. I was enthralled by such global grace notes as the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, Elephanta Island, Konarak's Sun Temple, the Ellora Caves, and Varanasi. But mostly I was moved by its people and their intense dance with life, a nation of souls accepting of their lot, no matter how difficult. I wrote of that first trip: "I was stunned by the richness of the land, by its lush beauty and exotic architecture, by its ability to overload the senses with the pure, concentrated intensity of its colors, smells, tastes, and sounds. It was as if all my life I had been seeing the world in black and white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant Technicolor." Every time I return, India reminds me that none of that has changed, that its ferment can't fail to touch curious travelers—to change them in some way. Which is what travel is all about. —KEITH BELLOWES

[FOREIGN DESK]

INSIDER'S BEIJING

This fall the China edition of *National Geographic Traveler* celebrates a decade in print. In honor of the milestone we asked our Beijing colleague, editor Li Ying, to share her hometown favorites.

SOLE POWER

Nei Lian Sheng Ziedian is a must-shop for traditional cotton slippers. The sole is made from hundreds of layers of rough cotton cloth, similar to a layer cake. Fuel a shopping spree with a breakfast of fried liver and steamed buns at a cheap, cheerful diner nearby.

THE SHOPPING BLOCK

East Drum Tower Avenue's musical instrument shops serve local indie bands, and its vintage clothing shops would fit in on London's Brick Lane. Here you can also find rare toys and manga action figures.



BICYCLE KINGDOM

To feel like a local, cycle along the moat of the Forbidden City [above] to its front gate. After sunset, you'll see vivid reflections of the corner tower surrounded by old bungalows, and you may glimpse the nightly lowering of the flag over Tiananmen Square.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION

A leader in experimental drama, the Beijing People's Art Theatre stages fine performances, such as a recent take on the popular Mandarin drama *Rhinoceros in Love*.

DRINK UP

Sip an after-dinner cocktail at China Bar, on the Park Hyatt's 65th floor overlooking the central business district.

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FRANCISCO LOPEZ & MONICA BRAND

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X-SERIES



Early Czech Out

OUR ROUNDUP OF PRAGUE HOTELS (August/September 2012, pictured here on iPad) tickled Karl Entenmann of **Gig Harbor, Wash.** “I had to laugh when reading about Prague’s new boutique hotels, which weren’t open when my wife and I arrived in 1991 with no hotel reservations,” he wrote. “We followed a sign for accommodations and chose a private apartment for rent near the city center. When we got there, we found food on the table, dishes in the sink, and an unmade bed—obviously the occupants had been kicked out for us. We slept on top of the blankets. When we returned the keys the next day, we were told that because of the city’s hotel shortage, many locals offered their homes and stayed with a

neighbor. Prague was indeed enchanting, but we remember the apartment the most.”

LIFE IN PLASTIC In *Tales From the Frontier*, August/September 2012, Costas Christ chronicled the Grand Canyon’s controversial ban on plastic bottles. Mary Reeves of **Seattle, Wash.**, wrote in with an anti-littering idea she picked up on her travels: “Recently, I was hiking in Erawan National Park in Thailand. Park workers stopped each hiker to collect

a deposit fee of 20 baht (about 60 cents) per bottle carried; they also marked each bottle with a number and logged our info in a notebook. Upon our return, we showed the same bottles and received the deposit back. At first our group was annoyed to be stopped and questioned—of course we would not throw our bottles into the wild. But we understood the practice once we saw how remarkably few discarded bottles there were along the trail compared with other areas in Thailand.”

REBEL WITH A CAUSE

Daisann McLane’s “Disaster Strikes—and Still I Go” (Real Travel, August/September 2012) resonated with June Tu of **Yonkers, N.Y.** “Like Daisann, I’ve never let danger interfere with my pursuit of travel. I’ve been on 14 safaris, including during the height of unrest in Zimbabwe. Not only are the country’s density and variety of wildlife breathtaking, but I felt that going supported the wonderful people who live there and helped protect the animals, too.”

INVISIBLE MAN Our “World Wonders” feature in the August/September 2012 issue praised Virginia’s Monticello for the architectural innovations of Thomas Jefferson. Mark Rhoads of **Richmond, Va.**, offered a counterpoint: “Jefferson designed many inventions to ensure visitors were not jarred by the presence of slaves at the home of the author of ‘All men are created equal.’ A dumbwaiter allowed wine to be delivered without a slave being seen; so too did the ‘revolving’ wall between dining room and the space where food was plated.”

[READER’S CHOICE]

TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

What travel experience changed your life? Asking that question inspired nostalgia:

“

“India’s Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal are a mini-paradise: birds and butterflies everywhere, clear water where you can swim with fish. On these pristine beaches, at 13, I first learned about conservation.”

ROXANNE BULSARA BASAVARAJ
BANGALORE, INDIA

“I grew up during World War II. Money was tight in my family, but our rare train trips from L.A. to San Diego taught me the joy of new experiences, which whetted my appetite for travel.”

IRWIN JACOBS
BOYNTON BEACH, FLA.



“At age 11, my family and I drove from New Jersey to Yellowstone National Park. The endless days on the road seemed grueling. But we loved Yellowstone: the geysers, the pools, the bubbling pots, the big sky. The next year, we went to Yosemite [above]. I immediately fell in love with the park and swore to work there one day. In 2008, after retiring, I learned to drive a bus. Last summer was my fifth as a Yosemite shuttle bus driver.”

WAYNETTE BROWN
SURPRISE, ARIZ.

”

NEXT QUESTION: What are your tried-and-true rules for packing and traveling?
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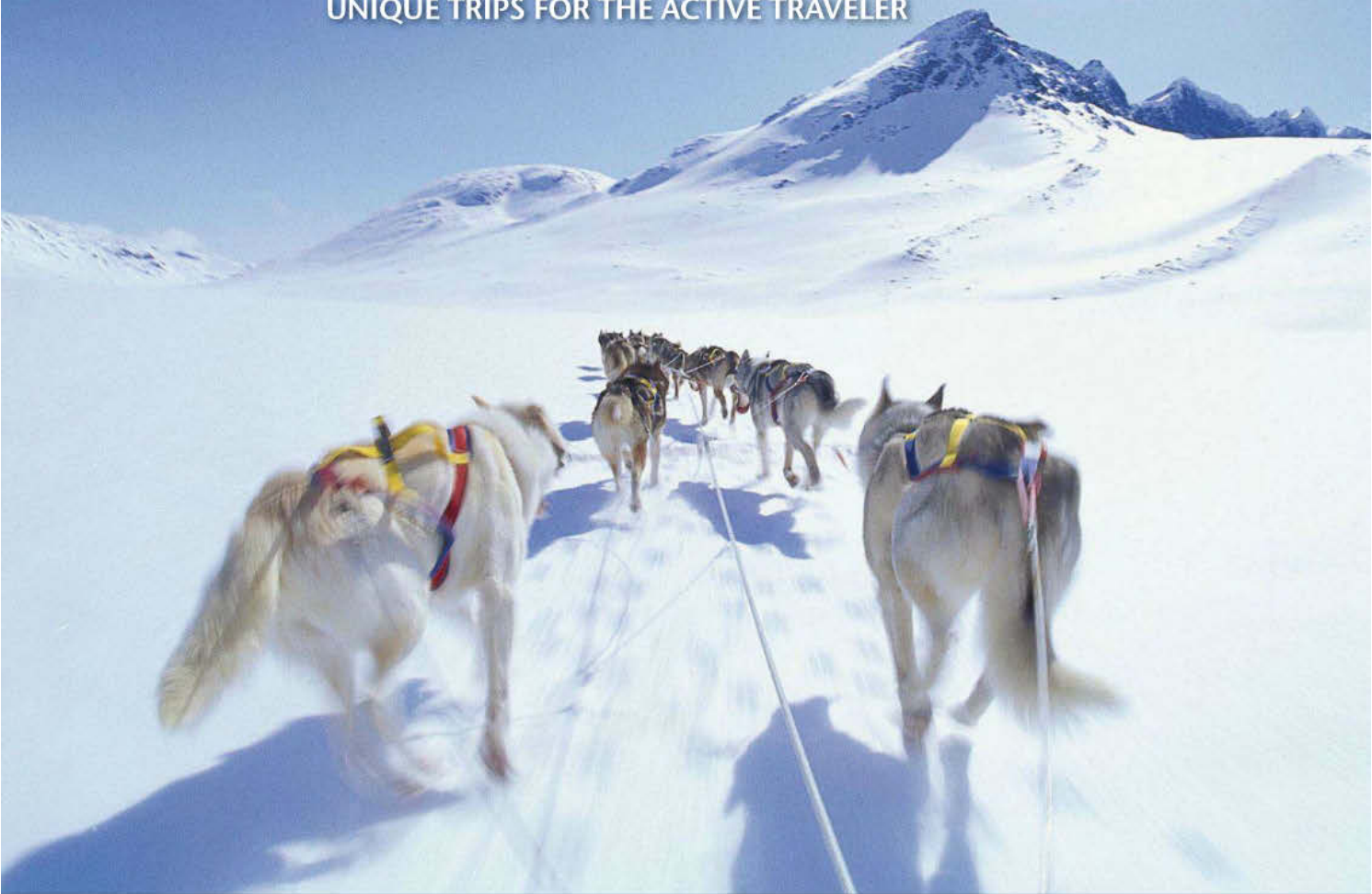
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Above: A team of huskies leads a sled through the crisp white snow in Sweden's Lapland.

SMART

TRAVELER

THE STAY

Pillow Talk in Patagonia

FOR ALL THE BEAUTY OF THE PATAGONIAN landscape—russet pampas, granite spires, and sky blue glaciers abutting the Andes across the southern tip of South America—the wind-whipped region is famously inhospitable to travelers. Campsites have long been the main option in these parts, a challenging prospect as freezing rain and gale-force gusts threaten much of the year. Now less hardy Patagonian dreamers can rest easy at local operator Vertice Patagonia's new series of **affordable eco-lodges** linking the region's popular attractions. In Torres del Paine National Park, which fully reopens this season after wildfires ravaged the Chilean forest last year, ranch-style Refugio Grey is the latest lodging upgrade. Near 103-square-mile Grey Glacier, the refuge features warm beds (from \$76), a kitchen serving Malbec wine and hearty meals like Argentine steak, and an expansive front porch with views of jagged, snow-tipped peaks. "As trekking season gets underway in November, you might spot guanacos, condors, and possibly even pumas, and seven types of orchids are in bloom," says Heidi Heinzerling, a former Torres hiking guide. "The park is just a three-hour flight from Antarctica, but its spring flowers can seem downright tropical." —ANDREA MINARCEK

Hikers explore Chile's Torres del Paine on circuits punctuated by eco-lodges.

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*Lions roam
Botswana's Chobe
National Park,
part of a new
five-nation
protected area.*



THE IDEA

Imagine There's No Countries

EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE PRESIDENTS of five southern African nations—Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Angola, and Zimbabwe—announced a game changer: the creation of **Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA)**. Although not the first, KAZA could be the largest cross-border protected area in the world. Stretching 169,885 square miles (nearly the size of Sweden), the conservation area brings 36 national parks and reserves together under one umbrella, including celebrated Victoria Falls and the Okavango Delta, creating a wildlife wonderland for animals and ecotourists. The hope is that one day a single tourist visa will allow for easy movement between the five countries.

Until then, tour operators such as African Travel can help you plan a KAZA safari. “Unlike past top-down conservation efforts in Africa, KAZA will involve local communities from the start,” says Chris Weaver, managing director for World Wildlife Fund Namibia, “making sure that they, too, get the benefits and opportunities from increased tourism.” —COSTAS CHRIST



THE PERSON

India's Music Man

FIT SOUNDS AS THOUGH **A. R. Rahman** is in tune with global music, that's because he's made history broadcasting the beat. One of the highest paid composers of all time, the hit maker from Chennai (Madras), India, fuses musical styles—from

reggae to Rachmaninoff—for Bollywood, Broadway, and Hollywood. Rahman swept the West in 2008 with his frenetic *Slumdog Millionaire* sound track, including the film's infectious anthem "Jai Ho," winning two Oscars, two Grammys, a Golden Globe,

and a spot on the *Time* 100. The "Mozart of Madras" also recently recorded an album with Mick Jagger and set up a music conservatory as well as a philanthropy in India. Next in the shuffle? *Monkeys of Mumbai*, an animated musical for DreamWorks.

How does travel influence your music? You learn so much when you're soul to soul. In Dubai in the '90s, I picked up a lot of Arabic instruments, including an oud [a type of lute]. A few months ago I met some folksingers in Kashmir, which felt like the 1960s. Living in London while working on [Andrew Lloyd Webber's] *Bombay Dreams* changed my perception about art. It all becomes part of my music.

How is globalization affecting music? The beat is becoming a universal four-on-the-floor rhythm. You can put any melody on that beat and people in a club are going to understand it, like robots. That's good and bad. You can put Indian music over a club beat, and people will dance. But you're missing all the dynamics and other little niceties that add depth.

What's your travel style?

I'm not a proper explorer. I sit on the train or at a restaurant and digest the place and its energies. My experiences are often internal. On airplanes, I watch a movie with subtitles and no sound. I love to look around and imagine what's in people's minds. They're so different but have the same zest for life, the same problems.

So you travel to find silence?

It's very important to listen to yourself. E-mails, text messages—external forces are constantly disturbing the stillness of the being. I prefer nature and beauty, but sometimes you have to imagine the calmness of nature and bring that with you internally.

—Katie Knorovsky

On Our iPad Edition:

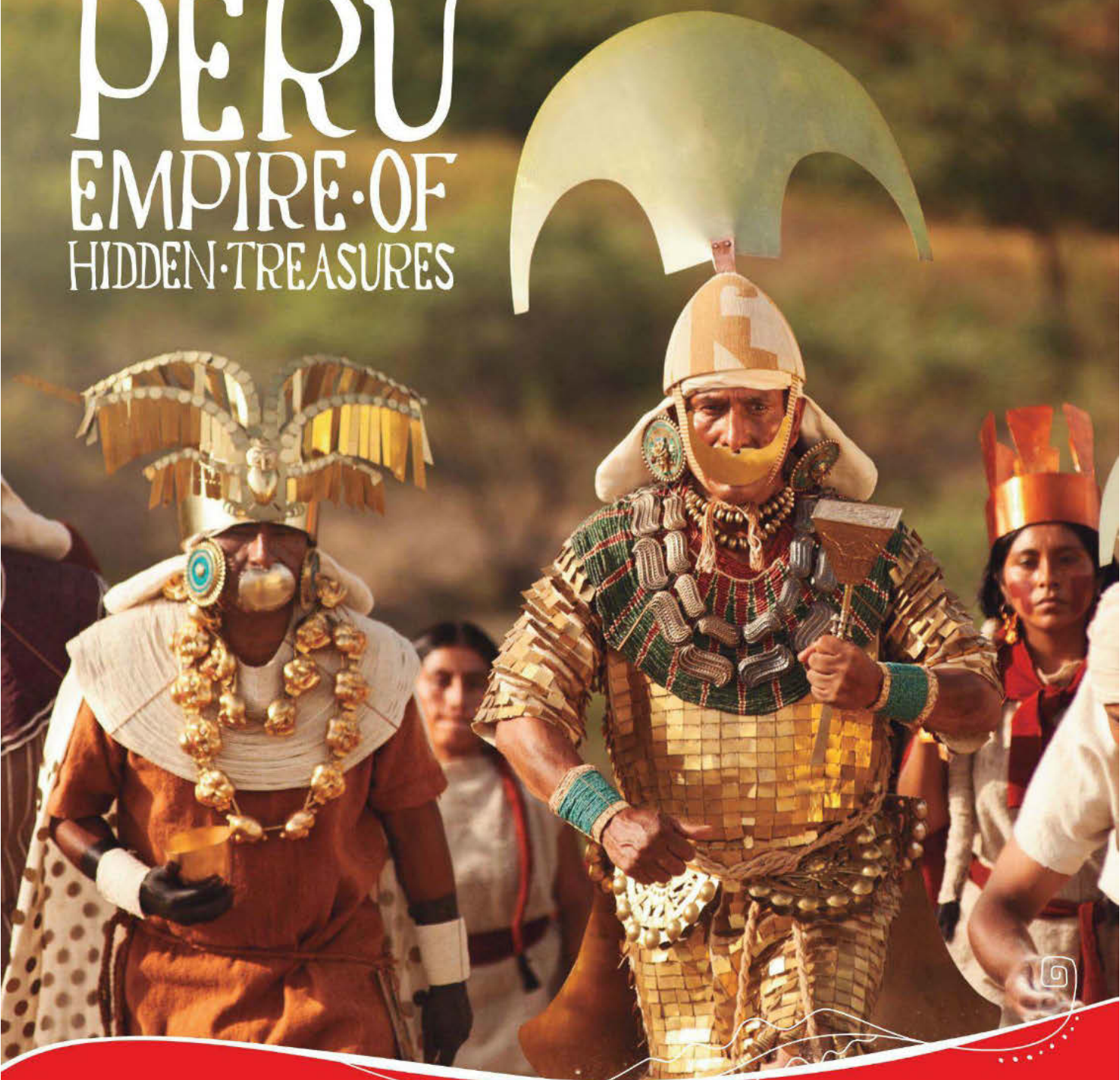
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THE PLACE

The Age of Albania

ALBANIA'S FIRST HUNDRED YEARS proved rocky (quick recap: two world wars, a Communist dictator, civil unrest). This November marks a century of independence from the Ottoman Empire, and the now stable Balkan country is primed for its global tourism debut. Across the Strait of Otranto east of Italy's boot heel, **Albania** offers a rewind of the classic Mediterranean holiday. The Ionian Sea laps at its sun-baked southern coast, where rolling hills covered in olive groves meet a "crystal clear" sea, says Dorina Zhupa, who lives in the cosmopolitan capital, Tirana, and recommends tiny beaches Pasqyrat and Livadhi. Beyond the coast is a landscape rich in history, including the city of Butrint, a World Heritage site that Roman poet Virgil called a "Troy in miniature." Hikers retreat north to the Prokletije (aka "Accursed") Mountains, the highest section of the Dinaric Alps, for secluded trails in Thethi National Park. Thethi village testifies to a rough-and-tumble past—its stone tower was once a refuge from blood feuders—but these days its rustic guesthouses exude the famous Albanian hospitality. —WHIT RICHARDSON

In Albania's remote "Accursed" Mountains, tribal customs live on, and villagers always have a cup of coffee or rakija (brandy) to offer.

DAVID B. SMITH

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THE LIST

Museum Season Preview



LONDON

The **Charles Dickens Museum** reopens in time to fete his 200th Christmas with a fresh look, seasonal readings, and mulled wine at the Camden house where the Victorian novelist (above) wrote *Oliver Twist*.



LONG ISLAND

Big news for the Hamptons: The **Parrish Art Museum** relocates November 10 to a dramatic structure in Water Mill by Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron showing William Merritt Chase's paintings (above).



BERLIN

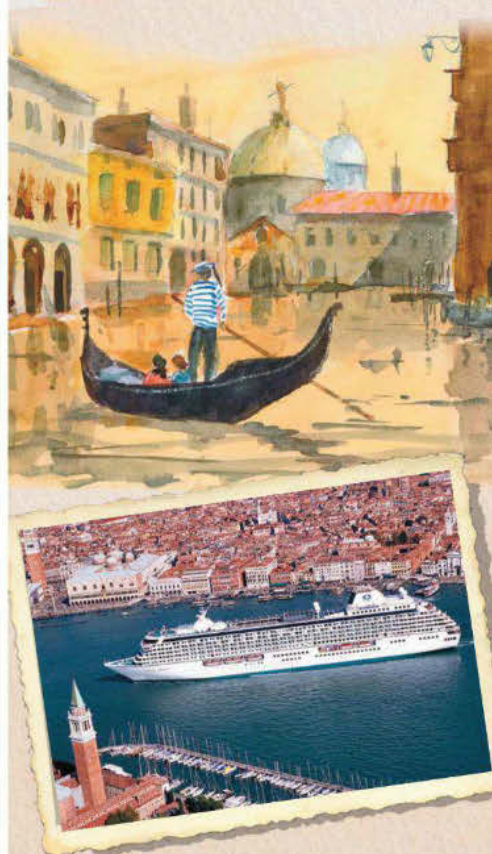
On December 6, 1912, a German archaeologist made the discovery of a lifetime—the Queen Nefertiti bust (above). The **Neues Museum** marks the centennial with “In the Light of Amarna” (December 7 to April 13).



ARKANSAS

In its first year, Walmart heiress Alice Walton's **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art** has set a tableau rich in icons of Americana, from Warhol to Washington portraits such as Charles Willson Peale's (above).

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Lower Garden District, New Orleans

THE LOWER GARDEN District, a languorous New Orleans area between the mostly brick Warehouse District and the mostly upper-crusty Garden District, saw its glory days in the 1850s. The noteworthy neighborhood lived through hard times in the 20th century, but the 21st has seen its revival—rebooted by techie twentysomethings and a Hollywood smitten with Louisiana's generous film tax credits and the area's cinematic looks (productions include HBO's *Treme*). "This is true New Orleans," says Jason Horton, co-owner of the antiques store Appartique. "We look all front-porch proper like our Garden District relations. But sneak out back, and we're playing great music, drinking good wine, and having a party."



1 Surrey's Café and Juice Bar Locals head to this brunch favorite for the just squeezed juices (orange, kale, satsuma), banana pancakes, and home-made biscuits dished up by a neighborly staff. To avoid the weekend wait, arrive before 10 a.m.

2 St. Vincent's Guest House Adventurous visitors can glimpse some of the colorful characters the district attracts by taking a swim (\$7) at the courtyard pool of this Victorian orphanage turned hostel.



3 Coliseum Square Fountain Neighbors and dog walkers gather here in a lush park at dusk for what often feels like an impromptu cocktail party. The Coliseum Square Association, a preservation group, hosts social events including local house tours.

4 Derby Pottery and Tile Ceramicists create Victorian-style glazed tiles with designs (bats, fleurs-de-lis) found on local buildings. The firm also replicates New Orleans's signature blue-and-white lettered tiles that spell out the street names embedded in city sidewalks.

5 Appartique Visitors tend to step into this antiques store and immediately reach for their smartphones to capture



Appartique's global pageant on Instagram: art deco desks, Javanese sculpture, custom-designed Italian men's shoes, and WWII model airplanes.

6 Friend This men's boutique exemplifies Magazine Street's increasing sophistication. Owner Parker Hutchinson stocks it with designer shoes, clothes, sunglasses, and fragrances.

7 Goorin Brothers Fourth-generation milliners make bespoke hats for both men and women, helping keep heads cool in this subtropical city.



8 Bridge Lounge This dog-friendly watering hole draws lawyers, staffers at the nearby Ogden Museum of Southern Art, and other neighbors.

—Andrew Nelson





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DAISANN McLANE

Ups and Downs of Vertical Travel

PAUL, MY FRIEND, is freaking out. When I spot him, he is huddled in a corner outside the entrance to a giant shopping mall in Kowloon. I'd invited him to lunch at a place with the best steamed pork dumplings in Hong Kong, and told him to meet me upstairs, in the restaurant. What's he doing here on the street? ¶ His first words to me are grumpy: "You didn't tell me where this place was." But I e-mailed you the exact address! I start to say, then I remember: Paul is terrified of heights. He points, accusingly, through the glass doors of the new mall to a high-rise atrium surrounded by a spiral of catwalks linked by narrow escalators that seem to

float in the air without any support. And my restaurant of choice? It's on the top floor of this stage set out of Alfred Hitchcock's film *Vertigo*.

I met Paul a few years ago. He writes a blog about—among other things—flying on dodgy, delay-prone airlines; tense border crossings; and trips to places he picks for their off-the-wall qualities, such as Turkmenistan and North Korea. Paul will try anything and go anywhere, and that's why I'm always forgetting about his acrophobia. It doesn't fit the profile of a seasoned traveler.

Great travelers follow the path in whatever direction it may lead. Most of the time that means straight ahead in a horizontal line, across deserts and oceans into the setting sun. But often our travels go vertical, too. Is there a destination in the world in which we're not being enticed (or urged, cajoled, guilt-tripped) into going up?

Open to a random page in any guidebook and you find descriptions that make you wonder if you should prepare for your trip not by packing but with a month of weight-training squats: "The four stairways leading up to the central platform each have 91 steps," or "No experience of the Palani Murugan temple is complete without ascending its 693 steep steps." Yes indeed, there are 693 steps that scale this South Indian sacred place. I counted each one as my knees threatened to give out. (Unfortunately for my spiritual development, this wasn't due to the awesome proximity of Hindu Lord Murugan.)

And how I remember Chichén Itzá's 91 stairs, thanks to my travel companion, an Indiana Jones wannabe in a safari shirt who insisted we climb the Maya ruin in Mexico under a blazing, 100-degree sun and then do the "interior ascent of narrow, slippery steps as high as seven tiers." Since then, I've tried to make sure my travels to places with attractions that have elevation are solo ones. When, in tropical, steamy Penang, I found out that the funicular railway to Flagstaff Hill was closed for repairs, I sighed with relief that no one was there to talk me into the long slog up.

Some anthropologists speculate that religious pilgrimage is the earliest tourism, but I think that chasing the thrill of high places is an even older form of travel. It would explain why so many holy sites, from Japan to India to Mexico, have climbing as the central element of the religious experience—they shrewdly incorporated an already popular activity. Certainly it's one of the most elemental and exhilarating forms of escape. To stand above the visible world on a very high place, released from the daily routines unfolding far below, is the closest we travelers may get in waking life to a soul-out-of-body experience.

In any case, human attraction for high places has an unbroken history that stretches from ancient times. I can think of almost no important cultural travel destination that lacks a lofty lookout, a cliff-top palace or rock temple, or a deity statue that requires travelers to dedicate an entire afternoon to the ritual of ascent.

And if a place happens to have no mountains...no problem! These days, travel industries in height-challenged destinations are outdoing one another to create man-made high places. You'll find the biggest concentration of sky towers, skyscrapers, and sky needles in some of the world's flattest cities. The dizzying Petronas Twin Towers? They're in Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur, elevation a mere 69 feet above sea level. The most elevated hotel, the new Armani Hotel in the 2,717-foot-

high Burj Khalifa—currently the tallest building in the world—offers a panoramic view of the utterly flat desert shores of sea-level Dubai.

About such hotels: Some years ago, I found myself rolling out of bed one morning in Shanghai's Park Hyatt, at that time the "world's highest hotel" (it occupies floors 79 to 93 of the 1,614-foot-high Shanghai World Financial Center). I love rooms with views, so when I learned I was going to be sleeping near a wall of glass windows looking out on the mother of all views, I was psyched and set my alarm for sunrise. But I forgot to factor in the cloud effect—when you rise higher than a few hundred feet, you're often in them—and Shanghai's celebrated smog.

I awakened, crestfallen, to a whiteout curtain of both. For a traveler chasing the high of high places, there is nothing more disappointing than being pulled abruptly down to Earth. Sure, my room was luxurious, but at that moment it was indistinguishable from a room on the first floor overlooking a parking lot. Paul, my acrophobic friend, would have loved it. ■



Uplifting: the views from Dubai's Burj Khalifa.

DAISANN McLANE divides her time between New York and Hong Kong. Follow her on Twitter, @Daisann_McLane.



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BOYD MATSON

When “No” Means Go

NEED SOMEONE TO BE MY WIFE for a couple of hours. Would you be interested in playing the part and taking a bath with me?” Admittedly, the line is more likely to end a conversation than begin one, but my time in Istanbul is short, and I’m desperate, so I immediately pop the question to every woman at our tour group’s “Welcome to Turkey” mixer. ¶ My quest is motivated by a desire to see something old and familiar in a new way. For the record, that’s not a dig at my actual wife—who isn’t on this trip—or the women in our group; it’s a reference to Istanbul, the ancient crossroads of East and West and one of the world’s great cities. Having been here numerous times, I’ve spent hours in the

usual hangouts—palaces and coffee shops, mosques and museums, the spice market and Turkish baths. I’ve loved every minute, but now I’m craving something new.

During the next couple of days, the itinerary will take us back to these places so familiar I could provide the narration. I could add some bonus commentary, too. “The Topkapi Palace, home to Ottoman sultans for almost 400 years, features rooms for concubines and eunuchs. *Without the former there’s not much need for the latter.* The Grand Bazaar has more than 3,000 shops. *All of which are prepared to make you a very special price because you are the first customer of the day.*” My cynicism not only disqualifies me as a guide but proves I could use a glass of fresh perspective.

Earlier this afternoon, I had found myself arguing with a guy behind the counter at the Süleymaniye Hamam, who refused to let me enter this historic bath reserved “for couples only.” I tried to explain that my guide, Gulin, is a woman, and I am a man: “Ipso facto, we are a couple.” He won’t waver from his rote response, implying her fluent Turkish and my nonexistent Turkish means we are not a true couple.

“No” is like a four-letter word to me. Hearing it riles me up and makes me determined to keep pushing, maneuvering, and negotiating until I get “Yes.” This personality quirk—or flaw, as some might describe it—has led to some exceptional travel experiences. As soon

as I hear, “You can’t go there,” I become fixated. Already today, by employing the same persistence I developed in college as a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman, I’ve managed to gain seldom granted access to the top balcony of the main minaret at the famous Blue Mosque. The minarets of more than 3,000 mosques puncture the Istanbul skyline. But the view is almost always from outside and below, and I want to see one from inside and above.

After a couple of hours of rejections, I find a guy who knows a guy who knows “the guy”—the muezzin, who for 25 years has been sounding the call to prayer at the Blue Mosque. Thanks to loudspeakers, he no longer climbs the interior circular staircase to deliver his calls from the top balcony. But if I want to make the climb and check out the view? “Please, be my guest,” he tells me.

Clearly, no one has been inside this minaret in quite some time. The lights aren’t working. It’s dark and dusty, with walls little more than shoulder width apart and narrow steps—102 steps by my count to the first balcony, then another 35 each to the second and third. On one step I sidestep a pigeon nest with two eggs, on another a nest with two chicks. But when I emerge into the light at the top, I find what I was looking for: a stunning panorama of the city and a rare vantage for taking in the beauty of the Hagia Sophia museum. I can’t

help but marvel at how no other tourist will likely have this experience today, or this week, or maybe even this year.

Back at the hamam, which was built in 1557 for Süleyman the Magnificent and today is one of Istanbul’s oldest baths, I’m not working to change a no to a yes because of the view. My interest had been piqued when Gulin pointed it out as Istanbul’s only historic Turkish bath that is coed, an intriguing venture in a city where conservative religious doctrines hold great influence and in a country where, during the time of the Ottomans, the punishment was often death for a man found in a woman’s bath. I assume Süleymaniye is mainly for tourists now, but the staff—the

scrubbers and rubbers, the soapers and splasers—must be Turkish. Is the staff coed? Does an undercurrent of treading in illicit waters permeate the bath?

It’s after Gulin and I are rejected that I start looking for a more convincing wife du jour. Once an adventurous soul accepts my invitation, we pass the couples test and are shown to a private changing room. Our eyes locked on opposite walls, we disrobe and quickly drape ourselves in the provided garments—I’m in a towel that appears to have formerly been a tablecloth in an Italian restaurant; she’s in a giant pair of boxer shorts and an oversize bikini top that could have been two large dinner napkins from the same trattoria.

We enter the bath area and see only tourists, and the staff is all male. Having my body pressed, kneaded, and shoved into hot marble is as painful as I remember. But I’m still glad I wouldn’t take no for an answer. Revisiting a favorite city can be like spending time with an old friend: If you probe deeply and ask questions, you may learn something new. And that only strengthens your friendship. ■



Finding fresh air—and a new angle—in Istanbul.

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CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

*A Letter
to the President*

CONGRATULATIONS, SIR. Surely you've got plenty on your plate. But I'd like to say something on behalf of travelers. Though we may not have a huge army of lobbyists on K Street, we could still use a little love during your upcoming term. ¶ We are the underappreciated engine that drives a \$1.9 trillion business in the United States, which includes (ahem) \$124 billion a year in tax revenue. What do American travelers—the ones who took nearly two billion trips in 2011—want from you? The list includes commonsense security, mass transit projects, fewer paperwork hassles for international trips, and consumer protections.

Frankly, the past decade has been so-so for us. Yes, the Department of Transportation made progress on passenger rights, requiring airlines to provide speedy refunds on luggage fees when bags disappear and more timely information about flight delays. Some visa requirements have been loosened. The trains got on track, too: California recently broke ground on its own high-speed rail project, and plans have been announced for Amtrak NextGen, which will cut travel time between Washington, D.C., and New York City from three hours to 94 minutes. But there's a long way to go. I happen to have a to-do list here:

Appoint a Transportation Security Administration chief who balances security with civil rights. Americans now find the TSA touching on almost every aspect of their travel experience. Checkpoints have popped up (seemingly at random) at train stations, on roads, and in subways. Agents often present passengers with two unwelcome choices: Walk through a poorly tested full-body scanner, or submit to an invasive pat-down. TSA's mission has been interpreted too broadly—to cover all transportation, including roads and even sports stadiums during special events. That needs to end. (No one says these areas aren't vulnerable, but what happened to the police?) The TSA should limit itself to protecting America's airports. Also, there must be better ways to screen law-abiding citizens than frisking them like jailbirds or microwaving them.

Invest in mass transit. Glittery high-speed rail projects can turn heads and make headlines. But lower-profile, slower mass transit projects can do even more. True, many mass transit decisions are made at the local or regional level, but sound leadership from the executive branch can move the process along. Travelers want you to double down on regional and local mass transit spending, with laws like the Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008, which offers grants to mass transit authorities to lower fares.

Streamline the paperwork for international travel. Travelers like being able to speed through customs using a trusted-traveler program such as Global Entry. They can already do that when they're crossing into Mexico or Canada or flying to the Netherlands, and, just added, South Korea. But removing the paper shackles that deter visitors from seeing Brazil, Russia, India, and China should be a high priority. Lowering these barriers without compromising national security also makes economic sense, and in case you needed a reminder, our economy could use all the help it can get. The U.S. Travel Association has waged a lonely campaign to remove some of these restrictions. "Few people understand the enormous role travel plays in the U.S. economy," says Roger Dow, president of the trade group.

Fund programs that encourage cultural exchanges. Even though there's talk about slashing government spending, please save a few dollars for initiatives that encourage students, teachers, and volunteers to travel and build bridges of understanding—programs such as the Peace Corps and the Fulbright Program, whose budgets are perennially in danger of reductions. Just last year, federal spending for such programs faced cuts that prompted the Fulbright Association to send out an urgent letter. (I know because, as a former Fulbright scholar, I received one.) Fortunately, Congress didn't end up making cuts and approved a budget of \$586 million. Without these initiatives, America might have fewer friends.

Strengthen consumer protections. In their desire to make a buck, airlines, car rental companies, cruise lines, and hotels sometimes go too far. The rhetoric about getting the government off the backs of businesses notwithstanding, regulators play an important role reining in predatory business practices. Consider airfares, which often come with so many fees that consumers find it nearly impossible to calculate the true cost of air travel. According to a report by IdeaWorksCompany and Amadeus, the airline industry collected \$22.6 billion of these surcharges in 2011, up an eye-popping 66 percent from two years ago. "We should know when and where we have to pay these fees," says Charlie Leocha, director of the Consumer Travel Alliance, an advocacy group on which I serve as a volunteer ombudsman.

No one is asking you to be the travel president. Just think of us a time or two during your upcoming term. We can't all get around in a motorcade or by military helicopter. And when your tenure ends, you'll have to go back to traveling a bit more like us. Don't you want to leave the travel business in better shape than you found it? ■



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COSTAS CHRIST

*Last Great Hope
for the Islands*

IT'S 1977 AND I'M SITTING by a smoldering fire of coconut husks on Pinney's Beach in Nevis. A guy in dreadlocks named Bushes torches a spliff and invites me to "reason" with him. Our conversation roams from the mundane to the metaphysical until the pink glow of daybreak, when he turns prophetic: "Dem crazy bald heads pollute di Earth 'til what future we gonna have?" ¶ Pretty potent stuff for an idealistic marine biology intern with the Island Resources Foundation. This conservation group was among the first to conduct an environmental survey of the islands and publicize the growing damage to the region's fragile marine habitats. ¶ Some three decades later, government inaction and

the tourism industry's unchecked sun-and-fun mentality make 1977 look like the good old days. Seventy-five percent of the Caribbean's reefs are threatened, more than any other marine region on the planet except for Asia's Coral Triangle, according to the World Resources Institute. And nearly three quarters of beaches are eroding away, the result of relentless development of coastal areas, including clear-cutting mangrove forests and dredging up sea grass beds. Coral reefs have also been ripped out to create larger cruise ship ports to accommodate the new breed of giant ocean liners that carry up to 8,700 passengers and crew. It's not just the beaches and reefs disappearing but fish, too, their spawning sites collapsing from pollution, habitat destruction, and overfishing. It's enough to make a tropical island lover swig a bottle of rum in despair.

But it may not be time to drown in drink just yet. With tourism in the Caribbean generating roughly \$20 billion in annual revenues and supporting two million jobs—employing one out of eight people (the Caribbean is the world's most tourism-dependent region)—local government leaders are finally making the connection between a healthy environment and those postcard-pretty island images. In what could be the most ambitious marine conservation effort ever undertaken, ten governments have formed the Caribbean Challenge

Initiative. The goal is to conserve at least 20 percent of each island's marine and coastal habitat—an unprecedented target that would nearly triple the Caribbean's marine protected areas to some 20 million acres.

"The tourism economy of our region relies to a great extent on protecting our natural heritage. The success of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative speaks to the very survival of the Caribbean as a travel destination and the prosperity of our people," says Prime Minister Tillman Thomas of Grenada, where three new marine national parks were recently created.

Other island governments are also putting their words into action: Since the initiative was unveiled in 2008, the Bahamas has set aside 1.2 million acres of unspoiled coast—one of the region's last true wildernesses—as the Andros Westside National Park. St. Kitts and Nevis has completed an integrated marine conservation zoning plan, and Jamaica has declared ten fish sanctuaries.

In a major conservation move, the Dominican Republic—one of the Caribbean's most biodiverse countries—created 32 new protected areas, safeguarding 2.7 million acres of marine habitat, including coral reefs and meadows of sea grass that are home to endangered species such as manatees and sea turtles.

"If these island nations can pull off protecting a full 20 percent of their marine ecosystems, the Caribbean will show the world that even small nations can deliver huge conservation results and provide a model that other islands can learn from," says John Myers, deputy director for the Caribbean Program at the Nature Conservancy, which is providing technical assistance.

The task will not be easy. Despite some impressive strides, much more still needs to be done. Next spring, sustainability advocate and Virgin CEO Richard Branson will host prime ministers, business leaders, and marine conservationists at his private retreat in the British Virgin Islands. Together they will wrestle with some of the most intractable challenges. On the agenda: Raise money to finance the project (at least \$50 million is needed), get the

support of the tourism sector—including businesses that have long benefited from lax environmental regulations (think cruise ships and megaresorts)—and encourage other Caribbean governments to sign on. (Where are you, Guadeloupe and Martinique? And what about you, Barbados?)

The good news is that it's not too late for the Caribbean. As local governments and concerned groups grapple with setting policy, what can reef-snorkeling, sun-basking travelers do? We can reward the islands that are trying to do the right thing by snorkeling, basking, and spending money on their shores: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, the Caymans, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Bushes, from Nevis, would call that "good reasoning." ■



Save our seas: nurse sharks in the Bahamas.

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Tuning in to Dallas

THE CITY SURPRISES WITH AN ARTS SCENE AS BIG AS TEXAS

By KRISTIE RAMIREZ

IN THE LANDSCAPE OF the Lone Star State, big and rich Houston boasts oil and other energy money, easygoing Austin has live music, and Dallas does over-the-top personalities. Dallas's reputation has long been shaped by saucy television shows such as the recently resurrected TNT series *Dallas*. But dig a little deeper, and, beneath the ten-gallon-hat/big-hair stereotypes, a smart, fresh city reveals itself.

Over the past few years, arts-focused initiatives have brought in five Pritzker Prize-winning architects and the first Santiago Calatrava-designed vehicular bridge in the U.S. "Although Dallas has always been considered a sports town, the visual and performing arts are generating a lot of

new buzz," says local philanthropist Cindy Rachofsky. November's mild temperatures (and decrease in mosquitoes) make autumn the perfect time to explore the city.

And those big personalities? They're still here. If there's one thing Dallas can always count on, it's the ability to laugh at itself with a knowing wink.

WHAT TO DO When the AT&T Performing Arts Center opened in 2009, the ten-acre complex changed the face of the **Dallas Arts District**. The candy-apple red Winspear Opera House designed by Norman Foster and Rem Koolhaas's 12-story-tall Wylly Theatre joined I. M. Pei's Meyerson Symphony Center and Renzo Piano's Nasher Sculpture Center to create a cultural nexus

worthy of Dallas's bravado. At the Dallas Museum of Art, take a smartphone tour of the permanent collections, which include African headwear, paintings by Texas artists, and ancient Mediterranean jewelry, or make your way around special exhibitions such as the installations by Glasgow-based Karla Black (on view through March). The DMA stays open until midnight on the third Friday of every month (except December) for date-night lectures, tours, and film screenings.

A half-block stroll from the museum leads to the wide-open spaces of **Klyde Warren Park**. This grassy five-acre deck built over Woodall Rodgers Freeway connects downtown to nightlife-focused uptown and is a much needed bucolic spread in a city



Locals lounge under the canopy at the Winspear Opera House, with views of the high-rises of downtown Dallas.



Brunch at Oddfellows includes eggs and a red velvet pancake (above); Sissy's southern fare pairs with quirky decor (left).

that tends to eat up green space with urban development. When completed later this year, the park will feature a Great Lawn for picnicking, a botanical garden, a dog park, and an interactive fountain. On the north side of the freeway the **Perot Museum of Nature and Science**, a dramatic concrete and glass cube by Thom Mayne slated to open in January 2013, planted its outdoor areas entirely with vegetation native to Texas, such as weeping willows and buffalo grass.

Despite the city's breakneck forward motion, one thing Dallas can probably never leave behind is the legacy of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. History buffs head to the **Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza**, formerly the Texas School Book Depository, where Lee Harvey Oswald is presumed to have fired the fatal shots. The area where Oswald allegedly stood is now encased in glass, but one can still pore over documents, photographs, and video or take a less scientific approach by soaking up the wild opinions from the conspiracy theorists who hang around outside museum doors. This year's 49th anniversary of President Kennedy's death lands on Thanksgiving, and the museum will keep its doors open in observation.

WHERE TO SHOP "Dallas women dress like no other. It's in their blood," says Brian Bolke, owner of chic lifestyle emporium **Forty Five Ten**. "Neiman Marcus trained generations of local women to always look their best and to be proud of it." The original **Neiman Marcus** flagship still stands

downtown. Forty Five Ten stocks its racks with big-ticket labels for men and women such as Dries Van Noten and Alexander McQueen, but it also carries artisan goods from Texas designers including handsome iron fireplace screens by Jan Barboglio, gold jewelry by Elizabeth Showers, and table linens made from vintage and repurposed material by Gaia, a Dallas company that employs local women in need. Around the corner, **Urban Flower Grange Hall**, a combination floral design and curiosities shop, brims with unusual finds such as taxidermic animals, hand-painted bird skulls, and necklaces with porcupine quill pendants.

At **V.O.D.**, former *Dallas Morning News* fashion writer Jackie Bolin and seasoned buyer Liz Thompson teamed up to sell contemporary fashion lines like pajama-inspired silk separates by Piamita, co-designed by El Paso native Karla Martinez, and chunky shoes and boots by a local cobbler, the Office of Angela Scott.

In an unmarked bungalow in leafy Bluffview (look for the lavender-colored door), **Cabana** opens only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and dedicates a section of the store to Dallas designer Nicole Musselman's entire Koch line of gossamer dresses and shirts and lightweight sweaters with animal prints.

Find traditional cowboy boots as well as styles picturing skulls and guitars at **Cowboy Cool** in the West Village.

WHERE TO EAT In the Bishop Arts District in Oak Cliff, a neighborhood southwest of downtown recently gentrified by artists,

designers, boutique owners, and restaurateurs, **Oddfellows** riffs on Mexican, Italian, and American classics. Dishes range from gingerbread pancakes to lamb and mint sausage Bolognese. But the main draw here just might be the fresh coffee made with roasted-to-order Cuvée Coffee beans out of Spicewood, Texas. Also in the neighborhood, confectionery **Dude, Sweet Chocolate** traffics in bonbons, sauces, and spreads incorporating unconventional ingredients such as porcini mushrooms, tequila, and dehydrated blue cheese.

Take the scenic route over the dramatic Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge spanning the Trinity River to the Design District, home to furniture showrooms, galleries, photographer studios—and **Oak**. The menu includes seasonally changing items such as Moroccan octopus and pork jowls, roasted duck breast and baby leeks, and beef filet with fava beans which make reservations a must.

Rosemont, a modern diner located in the Deep Ellum nightlife district just east of downtown, has a breakfast and lunch menu as straightforward as its clean and simple interior. Chef Tracy Miller's American fare features waffles, chicken salad sandwiches, and powdered doughnuts.

Just north of downtown, **Sissy's Southern Kitchen and Bar** serves the best southern food in the city. Lisa Garza, of *Food Network Star* fame, has mastered the art of fried chicken. Here she presents her buttermilk-soaked classic in paper-lined metal buckets with a side of whipped potatoes. Thoughtful details include Spode china and iced tea cocktails in mason jars. ■

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BITING INTO TAMPA'S CUBAN SANDWICH

SWEET HAM FROM SPAIN, mojo-marinated pork from Cuba, Genoa salami from Italy, Swiss cheese and dill pickles from central European and Jewish immigrants, layered inside crunchy bread and then pressed and toasted, make what is called a Cuban, but it's more than just a sandwich. "These ingredients represent the heritage and diversity of Tampa," says Yvonne Yolie Capin, a city council member who, last April, officially declared the Cuban the Florida city's signature sandwich. The Cuban's birthplace is Ybor City, a neighborhood northeast of downtown once dominated by a thriving cigar industry. Cuban immigrants arrived in the early 1900s to work in the factories, bringing with them their favorite midday snack—bread stuffed with sliced meat called a *mixto*. Local grocers and cafés renamed and sold the lunchtime staple. Family-owned **Columbia Restaurant** makes Cubans from a 1915 recipe. Food truck newcomer and third-generation Tampan Michelle Faedo takes her roots on the road with **Michelle Faedo's On the Go**, a mobile kitchen creating Cubans so delicious they recently won "Best Traditional Cuban" in a statewide contest. She credits quality ingredients, including the essential Cuban bread from **La Segunda Central Bakery**, where she recalls shopping with her grandmother. "I serve the food I ate when I was young; it's authentic and represents my city." —KIMBERLEY LOVATO

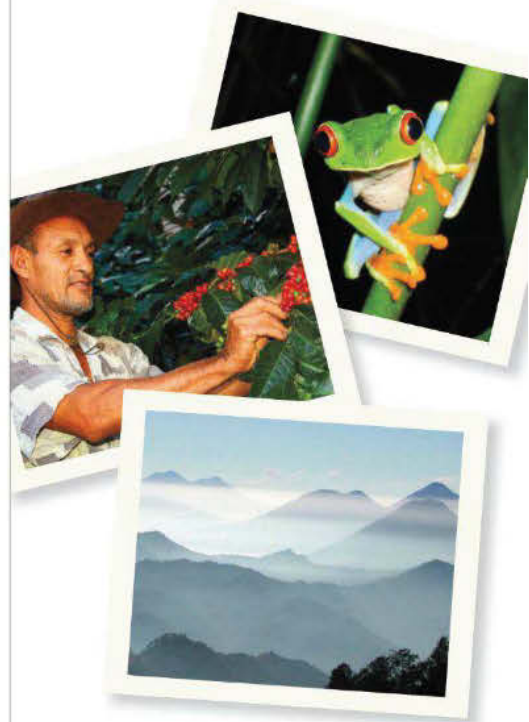


Florida's Columbia Restaurant has served Cuban sandwiches for nearly a century.

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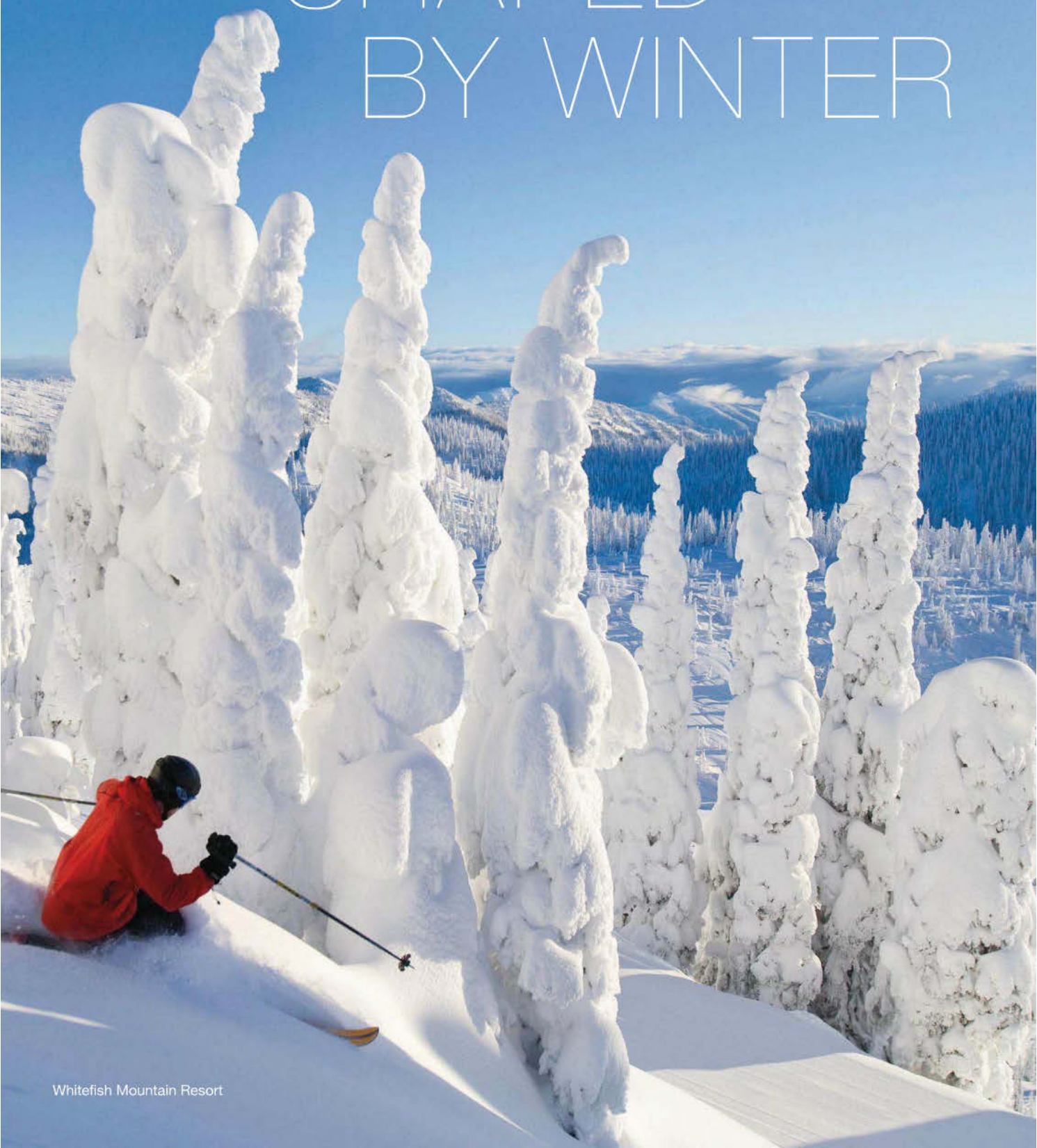
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AN INTERVIEW WITH WARREN MILLER

SKI FILMMAKER & STORYTELLER

Ski movie pioneer Warren Miller has carved turns from the Himalayas to the Rockies, from the Alps to Antarctica. His movies about those trips make you laugh out loud and yearn for more; they make you want to etch some tracks of your own. Recently, in his slopeside home near Big Sky, Montana and Yellowstone National Park, he sat down with veteran Montana journalist Scott McMillion to discuss mountains and the freedom they can give you.

Scott McMillion: People all over the world rave about your movies. What makes them so popular?

Warren Miller: When I started filming in 1947, there were only 15 chairlifts in the world. And I liked to tell stories about how wonderful those places are, so I would give a little history while guys were coming down the hill. Or I'd say something funny to cover up some bad photography. The movies got more sophisticated over time, but they're still basically stories about that simple word called freedom. That's what I'm always preaching.

SM: How does skiing equal freedom?

WM: When you get to the bottom of the hill after a good run, you're a different person. You've been psychoanalyzed. It's like somebody drilled a hole in your brain, inserted all this wonderful scenery, people, snow and freedom. And it forces out the bad stuff.

SM: Hard to argue with that. But why did you settle in Montana? The world has a lot of great skiing.

WM: In Montana, you can still find skiing the way it used to be. We've got fine resorts, but some of the motels at the smaller hills still advertise "color TV." And the best meal might be out at the only restaurant. In other states, resorts attract 25,000 people a weekend. I don't think there are 25,000 skiers in all of Montana. A good run plants a good memory and in Montana, you can still make a lot of memories in one day.

SM: So this is your winter home.

WM: I'm 87 years old. For 55 years of my life, I traveled the world with my skis and camera and made movies of all that stuff. But when I came to Montana, I built a house.



SM. Has skiing changed much during your career?

WM: When I started, anybody who could make six turns without falling was an extreme skier. The lifts ended where the mountain got really steep, because people couldn't handle that stuff.

SM: What's your take on snowboards?

WM: I put snowboards in my films seven years before they were allowed on chair lifts. I don't care what people have on their feet as long as they don't run into me and they have a smile on their face.

SM: What hasn't changed?

WM: People still do what it takes to go skiing. I don't like the term ski bum because a bum doesn't work. But at a ski resort, they're driving cabs, cooking pizza, shoveling snow, so that on a day like today, with six inches of fresh snow, they're the first guy or girl on the lift in the morning. That's the golden spoon they eat from.

SM: You make it sound pretty good. Fresh powder and golden spoons.

WM: I'm a big proponent of people taking a year off when they finish college. Cook some pizzas and go skiing. Who knows what could happen?

SM: Are you still making movies?

WM: I sold the film company. Now I'm focusing on my autobiography. I've been a storyteller almost since day one, and I'll be a storyteller until I die. And Montana is a good place to write.

SM: Here in the middle of a ski resort?

WM: This is a special place in a world with a lot of blemishes. In a city, you've got to breathe the smog, stop for the traffic, pay as much as \$15 an hour to park your car. When the snow covers everything, you don't see those blemishes. And at Montana ski areas, the parking is most likely free, though sometimes the lot might not be plowed right away.

SM: Is that a problem?

WM: Not really. In Montana, everybody keeps a shovel in their car.

View more about Warren and skiing in Montana at SKIMT.COM



Excursions from Belize City include tubing on a tributary of the Sibun River and viewing marine wildlife up close.

Caribbean Surf & Turf

OFF-THE SHIP ADVENTURES IN AND AROUND BELIZE CITY

By SADIE DINGFELDER

CHANCES ARE, THE WORLD won't end in December, and neither will the interest in the Maya's culture sparked by apocalyptic interpretations of their calendar, says Antonio Beardall, a research assistant at Belize's Institute of Archaeology. "People are fascinated by the Maya because of the mysteries that surround their culture—how they lived, their rituals, and, of course, their eventual decline," Beardall says. Belize boasts one of the greatest concentrations of excavated Maya sites of any Central American country, so cruise passengers who tender into Belize City have their pick of ruins to explore, as well as natural wonders and other historic sites.

JOURNEY THROUGH TIME Howler monkeys will likely be among the first to greet you as you travel northwest along the New River to **Lamanai**, a Maya metropolis that thrived for centuries after its neighboring settlements mysteriously collapsed. "The Maya occupied Lamanai into the 1600s and rebelled against

the Spanish, burning down the two churches they had built," Beardall says. Visit the churches' remains and then climb the high temple for a panoramic view of the complex, which includes a 13-foot stone mask and a former British sugar mill. For a quicker trip, hail a taxi and head north to **Altun Ha**, a Maya city that once housed 10,000 people. Climb the five-story Temple of Masonry Altars, or walk the plaza and keep an eye out for resident toucans. (3-6 hours)

VIEW THE WILDLIFE Belize's barrier reef has suffered from a recent lionfish invasion. Help prevent at least a few of these flamboyant interlopers from devouring native reef dwellers by culling them during a scuba diving adventure with **Sea Sports Belize**, located just a block from the cruise terminal. "We bring cilantro, onions, and tomatoes out on the boat and make a lionfish sevice for everyone to try," says tour owner Linda Searle. Sea Sports also offers jaunts to Shark Ray Alley, where snorkelers can commune with gentle nurse sharks

and stingrays. Had enough of the sea? Hire an outfitter and hike 30 minutes through the forest at **Caves Branch Archaeological Reserve**. There, you'll plunk an inner tube down in the Sibun River and drift along a peaceful tributary, dodging stalactites and watching for wildlife as you go. (4-5 hours)

TAKE A STROLL Walk around the tip of the harbor from the cruise terminal and pause on the Swing Bridge—a prime spot for people- and boat-watching. Then continue down Albert Street to **St. John's Cathedral** for a stately counterpoint to Belize City's otherwise ramshackle Caribbean charm. Visitors can trace the country's colonial history by reading the plaques on the wall, which spell out the fates of early settlers of British Honduras. When hunger strikes, follow the lead of Belizean schoolchildren who snack on meat pies, flaky pastries filled with spicy beef or chicken. Locals debate which restaurant makes the best meat pie, but **Dario's** has been serving them for over 16 years. (1-3 hours) ■

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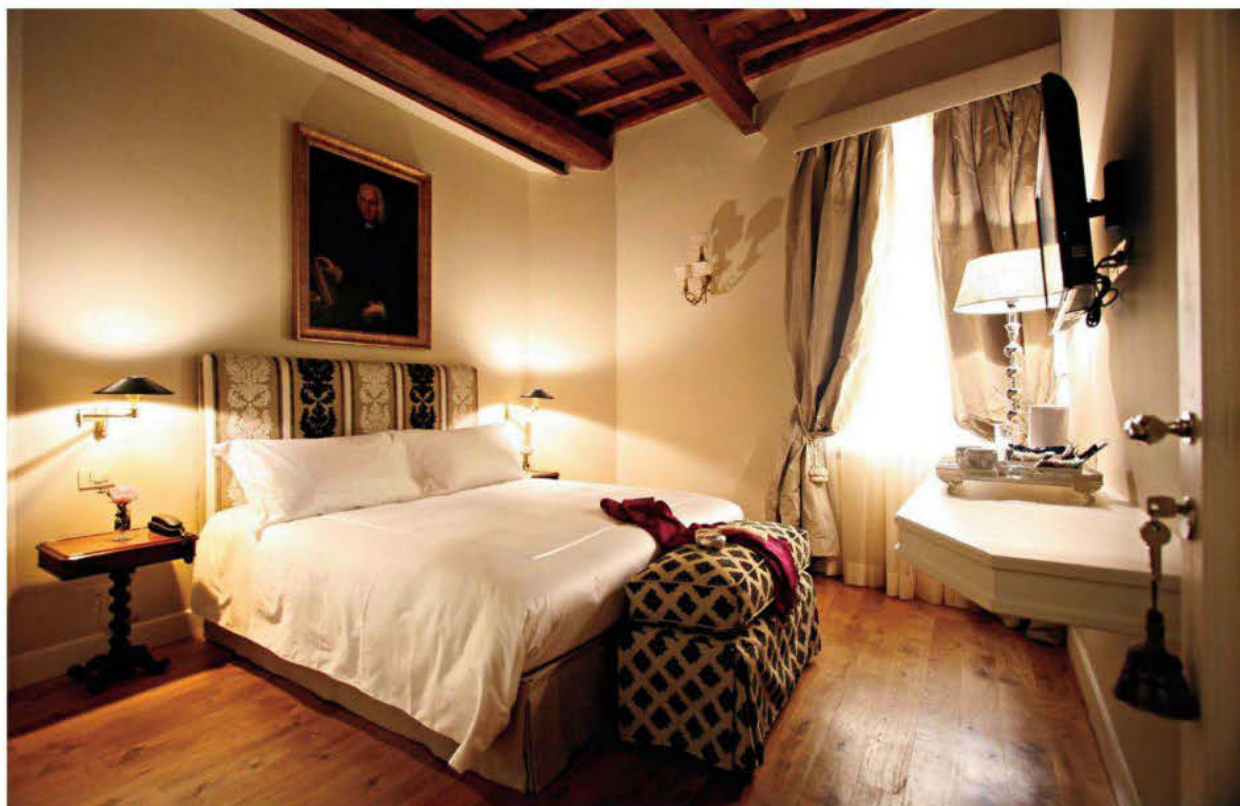
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Crossing Condotti offers elegant rooms in the heart of Rome's boutique shopping district located near the Spanish Steps.

Rome, Sweet Rome

STYLISH PENSIONES IN THE CITY'S HISTORIC CENTER

By AMANDA RUGGERI

FOR DECADES IN ITALY, "pensione" and "fashionable" didn't belong in the same sentence. Small and family-run, without a concierge, room service, or sometimes even a working television, pensiones were seen as downright dowdy—especially in a style-conscious city like Rome. But today, Italy's bed-and-breakfasts have grown up. They remain intimate affairs, a "home away from home" where, over coffee and a *cornetto* (brioche), you can pick the owner's brain on what to see and do in the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD GEM Before you even enter the **Guesthouse Arco dei Tolomei**, time seems to turn backward: The medieval palazzo is tucked away on a tiny lane in Trastevere, the kind of quarter where the local knife-sharpener still wheels his bicycle down cobblestone streets every week,

announcing himself with "arrotino." Inside the residence, the sense of time travel only increases. Owners Marco and Gianna Paola Fè d'Ostiani decorated the six guest rooms with their noble family's belongings: an 18th-century walnut wardrobe, an antique crystal chandelier, even family portraits. Guests gather in the morning for a breakfast that includes homemade cake, Italian hams and cheeses, and jams made from the apricots and blackberries from Gianna's countryside garden. Marco, who was born two blocks away from the inn, shares sight-seeing tips. "Don't miss the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere," he says. You can still descend beneath the centuries-old church and see ancient Roman houses. For gelato, Marco sends guests to the Bar San Calisto, where he says scoops aren't just tasty but "the most honest in Rome—one euro for a cone." From \$160.

ROOM WITH A VIEW At its best, a pensione reflects both its neighborhood's history and its owner's personality. **Aklesia Suite** ticks both boxes. Located just up the street from the Colosseum, Aklesia's three sun-filled rooms, with their original art deco tiled floors and antiques, are convivial and warm—like the owners themselves. "We want our guests to feel as if they're at their own house," says Gianfranco Valleriani. His wife, Aklesia, has even been known to do the guests' laundry. Located in the central, but residential, Celio neighborhood, the B&B is just a minute's walk to local favorites like pizzeria Li Rioni and wine bar Il Pentagrapolo for live music. From \$103.

PIAZZA PLUSH When brothers Marco and Pierluigi Sole turned their grandfather's apartment in Piazza Navona into a bed-and-breakfast two years ago, the economic crisis



Rome's Colosseum is a short walk from the comfortable Aklesia Suite pensione.

had just hit. "We knew if we did something standard, it would be hard to sustain," says Marco. "So we decided to invest in luxury." But the personal touches of the three-room **Locanda del Sole**, run by the brothers and their friend Emiliano Galli, make the B&B as intimate as it is upscale. The furniture is handmade in Italy; breakfast specialties include homemade Nutella rolls; guests are greeted not only with a bottle of Lazio wine and hazelnut chocolates but also with a complimentary minibar complete with prosecco. On an evening *passeggiata* (stroll), guests can browse limited-edition handbags printed with images of Sophia Loren at the Massimo Trulli showroom and dine on homemade pasta at Rome's oldest restaurant, La Campana. From \$184.

TOP STREET CREDITS The six elegant guest rooms at **Crossing Condotti** take their names from nearby streets: Babuino, Frattina, Condotti. After all, the residence's location is worth bragging about. It's in the heart of the Spanish Steps neighborhood, with tony shops such as Fendi and Ferragamo. Rather than compete with the area's large five-star hotels, the owners, Alfio and Carlotta Puglisi Gravina di Montevago, chose to keep Crossing Condotti small, with both the comforts and privacy of home. The rooms, furnished with old master paintings and walnut bureaus, have views of the boutique-lined streets. Choice amenities include Nespresso machines and L'Occitane toiletries. There's no hot breakfast, but guests have 24/7 access to a fridge stocked with Peroni beer and plum cake—if, that is, they're not taking coffee at the nearby Antico Caffè Greco or sipping local wines at Palatium, a wine shop and restaurant run by the Lazio Regional Food Authority. From \$234. ■

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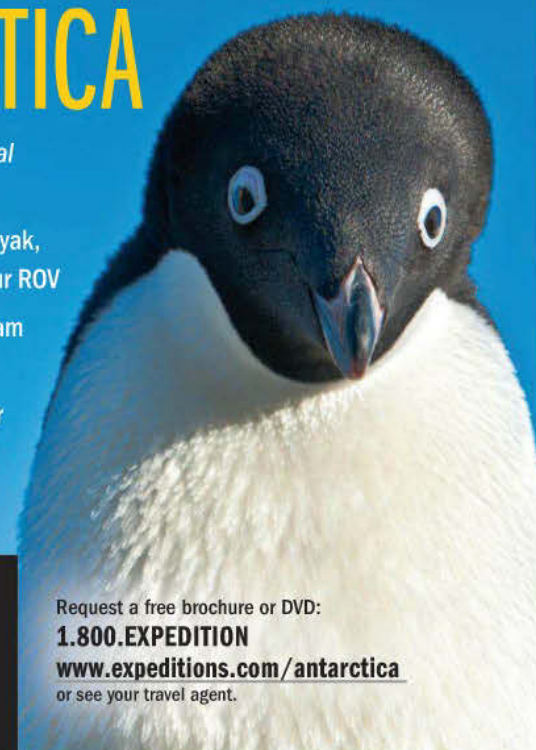
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Hollywood Stars

TEN TOP KID-FRIENDLY TAKES IN TINSELTOWN



A girl plays in a grove of cast-iron lampposts at the L.A. County Museum of Art.

1. Hunt for chipmunk paw prints in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where Alvin, Simon, and Theodore made their impressions last year. **2.** Arrive at Universal Studios Hollywood when it opens and head straight for the studio tour. **3.** Spot a celebrity while loading up on pancakes on the patio of the Alcove Café in the Los Feliz neighborhood. **4.** Ponder gravity at the Griffith Observatory, where the Gunther Depths of Space gallery includes scales to show how a 100-pound Earthling would weigh the equivalent of 37.8 pounds on Mercury. **5.** Behold the neighboring statues of Johnny Ramone (shaggy guitarist from punk rock's Ramones) and Toto (shaggy cairn terrier from *The Wizard of Oz*) among the graves at Hollywood Forever Cemetery. **6.** Mosey up Beachwood Drive to Sunset Ranch for a horseback ride on the hills near the Hollywood sign. **7.** Hear the pipes of the Mighty Wurlitzer herald a matinee at El Capitan, a revived 1920s theater. **8.** Climb Mount Hollywood by following the Charlie Turner trail from the Griffith Observatory's parking lot to the top (2.5 miles round-trip) for a sweeping view that includes the Hollywood sign. **9.** Stand under a 340-ton boulder ("Levitated Mass" by Michael Heizer) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. **10.** Visit the museum at dusk to see a forest of vintage streetlamps light up Wilshire Boulevard ("Urban Light" by Chris Burden). —CHRIS REYNOLDS

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Surrounded by morning mist, Theresa Crowley boards a small boat on Lago de Atitlán in Guatemala

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Paradise Drive

RIFFING THROUGH MAUI'S WILD BACKCOUNTRY,
HANA HIGHWAY COMES WITH ITS OWN SOUND TRACK

By ILIMA LOOMIS
Photographs by SUSAN SEUBERT

*At Maui's Oheo Gulch,
falls link countless
water holes dubbed the
"Seven Sacred Pools."*



Hana Highway delivers big smiles at the Huelo Lookout Fruit Stand (left) and during ukulele lessons and shows at the Travaasa Hana hotel (below).



COME, LET'S GO for a car ride," invites classic Hawaiian singer John Pi'ilani Watkins in a tune with as many twists and turns as a mountain road. More than a song to sway to at a luau, his cheerful melody speaks to an island truth: On Maui, music and road trips go together like surfers and hula girls. Centuries of locals have composed love songs of thanks for the island's natural beauty, offering up chains of lyrics as flowery as a lei of aloha, says hula master Hokulani Holt. "Hawaiians are a place-based people," she says. "We know the land intimately." And for a people who love to *holoholo ka'a*—

go for a drive—few trips journey deeper into Hawaii than Maui's famed road to Hana. With more than 600 curves in just 52 miles, **Hana Highway** sets the scene for drama—and car-commercial fantasies. But it's as smooth as a riff on a Hawaiian steel guitar compared with the precipitous footpath and bumpy steam barge that were once the only ways to reach rugged, remote East Maui. It took more than 16 years to complete the highway linking Hana village with the city of Kahului. Bolstered by ropes and lowered over cliff faces, crews set dynamite to blast the pathway and built more than 50 bridges across gulches and waterfalls. When the project was finally done in 1926, Hana celebrated with a two-day luau.

Hana Highway begins in Kahului, in

Maui's central valley and site of the island's main airport, but the real journey starts several miles east in Paia. To greet the day with a swim, as many residents do, stop at **H. P. Baldwin Beach Park**, a 1.5-mile stretch of pristine white sand on the island's north shore. Just up the road, hippies, surfers, artists, and yogis mingle in the bohemian town, where you can perk up at **Anthony's Coffee Co.** or snag an emergency bikini at local designer shops **Maui Girl** or **Letarte**.

"It's splendid to see the surfboards surfing to the sandbar," wrote songwriter Alice Johnson to describe **Hookipa Beach Park**, a few miles farther on. A cliff-top lookout above the park is an ideal perch to watch local surfers hotdog in head-high waves, while some of the world's top professional

windsurfers and kite-boarders practice jumps and flips.

The communities of Haiku and Huelo mark the outskirts of Maui's north shore. Beyond, bamboo and ginger plants creep out of the forest toward the road, while the highway winds deep into a dripping jungle. Carved out of the rain forest, **Keanae Arboretum's** trails course through wild and cultivated tropical plants, including sugarcane, banana, and breadfruit—"canoe crops" brought over by early Polynesian settlers. Just past the gardens, a turnoff leads to Keanae Peninsula. "This is the land where taro grows like the days of long ago," sings Eleanor McClelland Heavey in the lyrics of "Keanae." Farmers in Keanae village still grow the starchy root with hand tools, tending the same flooded *lo'i*, or taro fields, where their ancestors waded before Western explorers arrived. Usually consumed as the pastelike poi, taro nourishes more than the body. "It's spiritual," says grower Tweetie Lind. "When we take care of taro, we're in tune with the ground, the mud, the water."

And here at the edge of Maui's massive watershed, water saturates the air—drenching you in a sudden downpour, pooling as dew on skin, gathering high in the mountain to trickle, stream, and plunge to the sea. About three miles past Keanae, you can dip your toes in **Upper Waikani Falls**, with a short rocky trail to a pool fed by three

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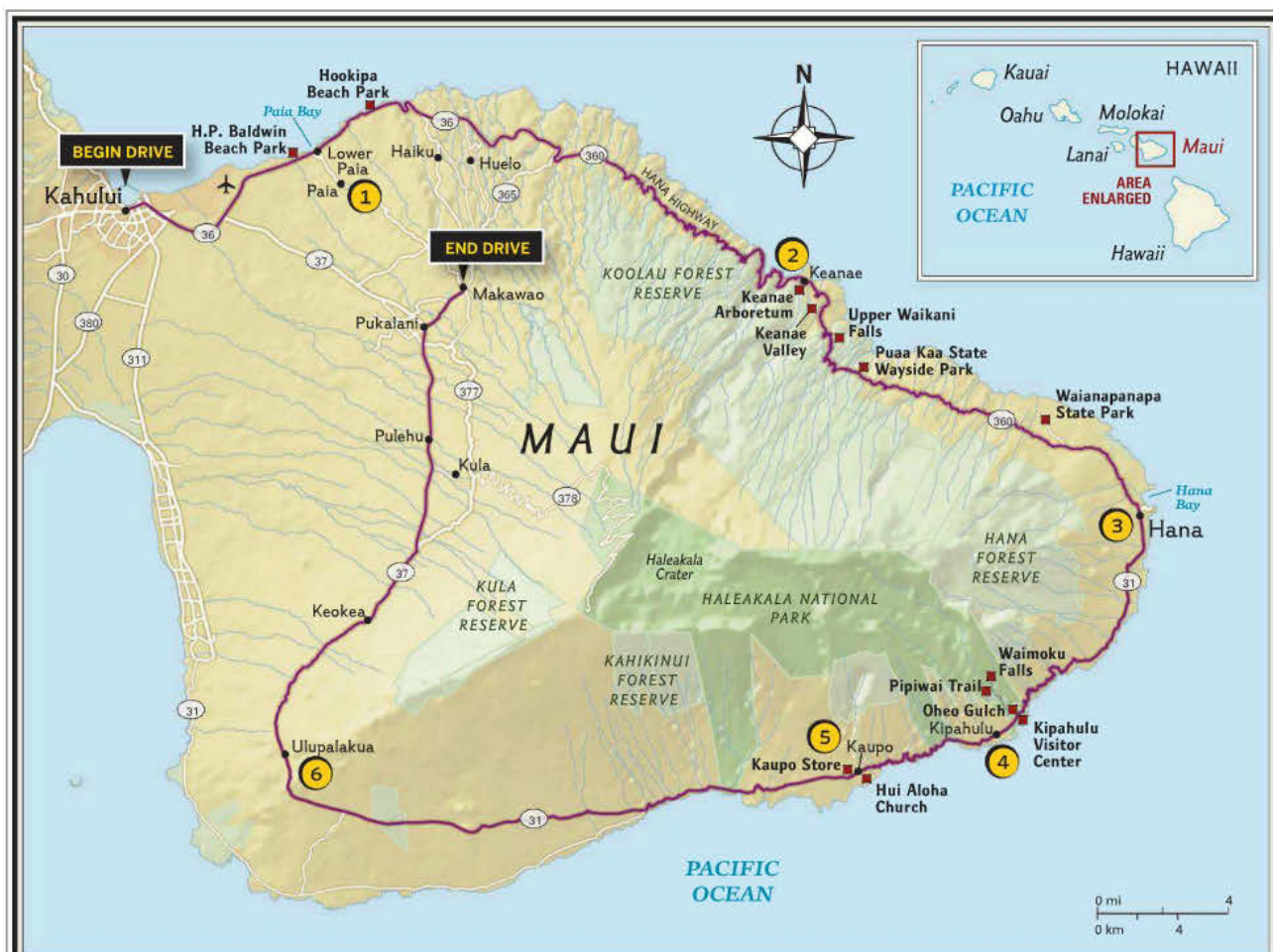
cascades. Three miles farther, a paved walking path at **Puaa Kaa State Wayside Park** provides easy access to cascades and pools as well as restrooms and picnic tables.

As Hana nears, the road straightens. The ocean turns midnight blue; the beaches smolder black, gray, red, and white. The jade green mountain reaches high into the clouds. “This is paradise,” sings Watkins in “Heavenly Hana.” “Your beauty is nature’s jealousy.” Stop at **Waianapanapa State Park**

for a black-sand beach and walking trails. If the ocean is too rough for safe swimming, follow a path to caves with underground freshwater pools. Or pick up lunch fixings at **Hasegawa General Store** and head to white-sand Hamoa (Ernest Hemingway is said to have once proclaimed it the world’s best).

About 11 miles past Hana, in the Kipahulu section of **Haleakala National Park**, Kipahulu Ohana gives tours of a working taro farm, including a chance to slog

knee-deep through submerged lo’i to work alongside grower Lind and her husband, John. “People feel the mud between their toes,” Lind says. Take a moment to feel the winds here, too. Local lore claims each has its own name and personality, including the “love snatcher” wind credited with retrieving a fickle wife. Nearby, a chain of falls links Oheo Gulch’s freshwater pools. **Piipiwai Trail** traces a stream to a 400-foot waterfall. Though the road isn’t as bad as



PLAYLIST

Chained Melodies

Honolulu musician Israel “Iz” Kamakawiwo’ole’s medley of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and “What a Wonderful World” launched him (and his ukulele) onto the international stage. The first Hawaiian album to go platinum, his *Facing Future* marks its

20th anniversary next year and continues to influence local musicians. This playlist of Maui classics sets a melody to the places of Hana Highway. (Note: Lyrics are translated here from Hawaiian; songs are available on iTunes.)

① “The spray of the sea comes as a breath, rustling the leaves of the ti plants,” sings Kealii Reiche in “Ka Nohona Pili Kai” about his

grandma’s beachside **Paia** home.

② Now a hula master in Oregon, Pekelo Day was 15 when he wrote “Kilakila A’o Ke’anae” to honor his native **Keanae** village. ③ A master of slack-key guitar and falsetto singing, Pekelo Cosma filled three albums with original and traditional tunes about his hometown of **Hana**, including “Hana No Ka Oi.” ④ Uluwehi Guerrero travels

annually to **Kipahulu** to sing its eponymous anthem in honor of his great-grandmother, who was born there. ⑤ In “Me Ka Nani A’o Kaupo,” songwriter John Pi’ilani Watkins invites listeners to see the beauty of **Kaupo** but warns, “The road has many turns.” ⑥ Another Watkins classic, “**Ulupalakua**,” celebrates *ka home a’o paniolo*—the home of the cowboys. —I.L.

DETAILS

Distance: 105 miles, Kahului to Makawao **When to go:** Summer and fall tend to be driest. **Plan Your Trip:** See www.gohawaii.com/maui.



its reputation—all but a few miles are now paved—if you choose to drive beyond Kipahulu, expect some washboard sections, and use extreme caution around blind curves and during wet conditions.

A century ago, the back side of Haleakala was a thriving community of ranches, sugar plantations, and fishing hamlets. Today only a handful of residents remain, but you can still find welcome (and refreshment) at tiny **Kaupo Store**. Little has changed about the tin-roofed, plank-walled general store since it was built in 1925, though now it sells Hawaiian shirts and local jewelry in

The ride gets bumpier past Hana, with a sometimes unpaved road passing black lava fields (above) and stands selling Hawaii's iconic floral souvenir (below).



addition to the “Beer-Wine-Sake” on the original sign over the door. Just down the road, whitewashed **Hui Aloha Church**, built in 1859, stands on a windswept outcropping of rocky shoreline with six rows of wooden pews. A salt-sprayed graveyard overlooks the sea near wind-bent ironwood trees.

It's a long but meditative drive back to the resorts of Maui, passing through places so empty, the ruins of ancient villages are hard to spot among the scattered lava rocks. After barren Kahikinui and the hardscabble homesteads of the south shore, signs of civilization gradually return. Cattle graze in the high, cool grasslands of Ulupalakua, where *paniolo*, Hawaiian cowboys, still ride the range. It's a working ranch and closed to the public, but the **Ulupalakua Ranch Store** deli grills up burgers made of grass-fed island beef.

The meadows become estates and then neighborhoods as the road weaves through pastoral Kula and suburban Pukalani. Finally, at the traffic light—the first since breakfast—turn toward Makawao, with its neatly tended yards and cow-town storefronts and crooked sidewalks. Now that modern life has re-emerged, Hana's memory fades like the echo of a song.

But whenever you long to return, hula master Holt says a simple melody can transport you there. Even if you don't understand the Hawaiian lyrics, she says, the feeling translates—of a sudden rain, a playful breeze, the warm greeting of a new friend. “As I'm driving along, sometimes I've got to pull over, because I'm so moved,” Holt says. “I pull over the car so I can be in the moment of this music, this place.”

Hawaii native ILIMA LOOMIS is a former staff writer for The Maui News.

EAT

Hawaiian Punch

In Haiku's Pauwela Cannery, family-owned **Baked on Maui** makes everything from scratch; stick your nose in a bag of bread and you can still smell the yeast. Try the *liliko'i* bars—like lemon bars, made from the tart juice of passion fruit harvested down the road. At north shore landmark **Paia Fish Market**, locals squeeze into communal picnic tables for fresh catches and island-raised beef. You choose the fish, the prep, and the presentation—wahoo fish tacos, mahimahi fish-and-chips, Cajun ahi burgers. In Makawao, **Market Fresh Bistro** makes good on its name. “Almost everything on our menu is locally sourced,” says chef Justin Pardo, who works closely with island farmers and ranchers. The braised short ribs, made with Maui Cattle Co. beef, are so popular they're on the brunch menu; other favorites are Haleakala Ranch braised lamb and French toast made with Hawaiian sweet bread and drizzled with Wailuku honey.



SLEEP

On Island Time

A plantation manager's home turned bed-and-breakfast, the **Haiku Cannery Inn** sweetens stays with a sprawling estate and generous lanais (verandas) that boast sweeping views of the ocean and Haleakala, Maui's dormant volcano. In the heart of the north shore surf town Paia, you can head out the front door of the chic **Paia Inn** to funky shops and restaurants, or take a few steps out back to a perfect white-sand beach. To extend your East Maui exploration, consider lingering at the high-end **Travaasa Hana**. The former historic Hotel Hana Maui offers hula, horseback riding, wine tastings, food talks, and dining with a Polynesian flavor (such as ahi tartare, above). And a traditional *lomilomi* massage at the spa works out kinks after a long drive. —I.L.

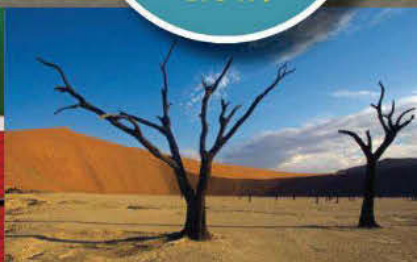


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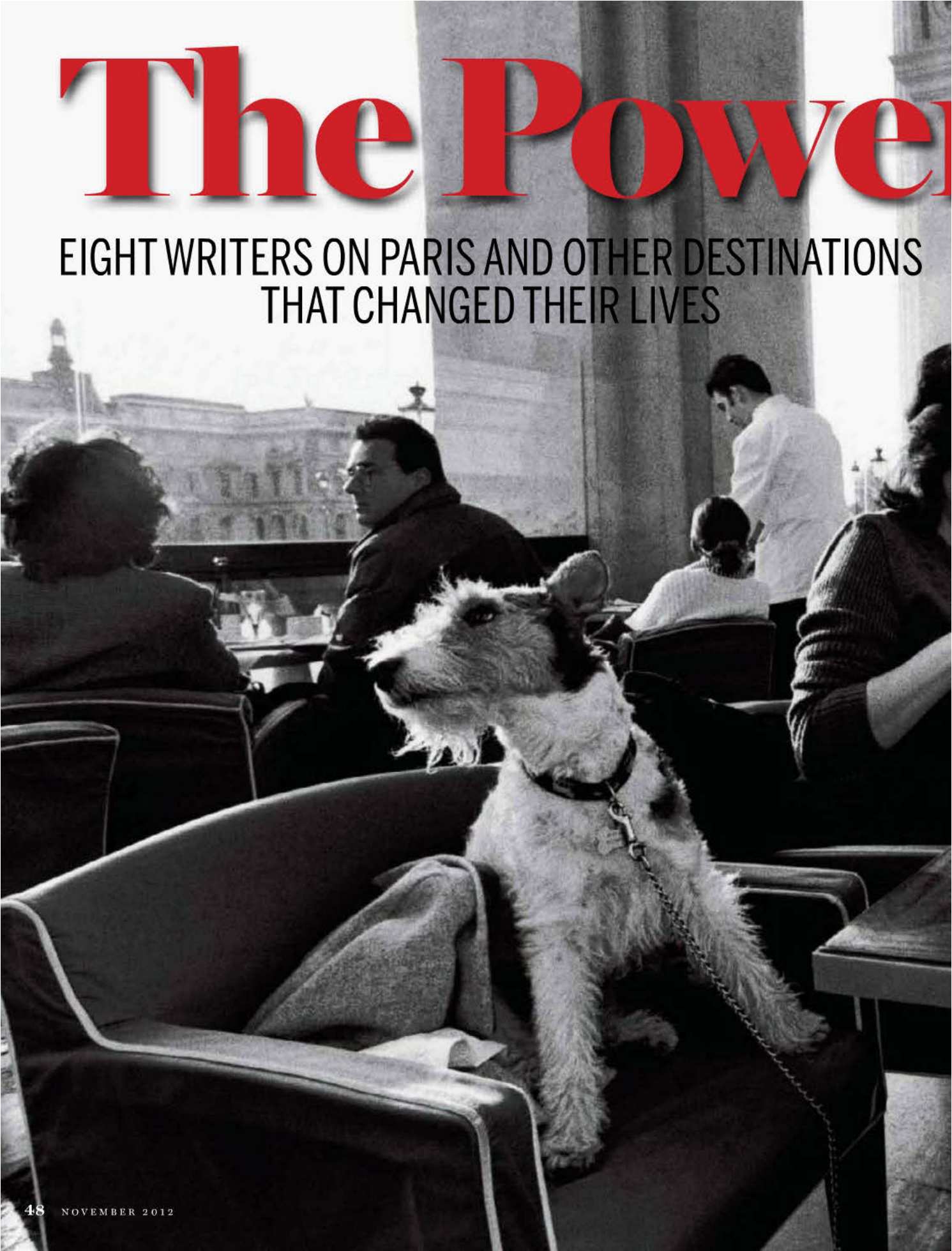
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*A timeless Paris
café scene plays out
under an arcade
along the Cour
Napoléon near
the Louvre.*

La Bonne Vie in Paris

By DON GEORGE

I first moved to Paris as a French literature undergraduate on a Princeton summer work-abroad program. Living with an aristocratic French family in shabby 16th-arrondissement splendor, I sipped the simultaneous thrills of inhabiting the past, surrounded by 18th-century family portraits, armoires, and settees, and rewriting the present in a foreign tongue. My providential presence provided the twentysomething heir

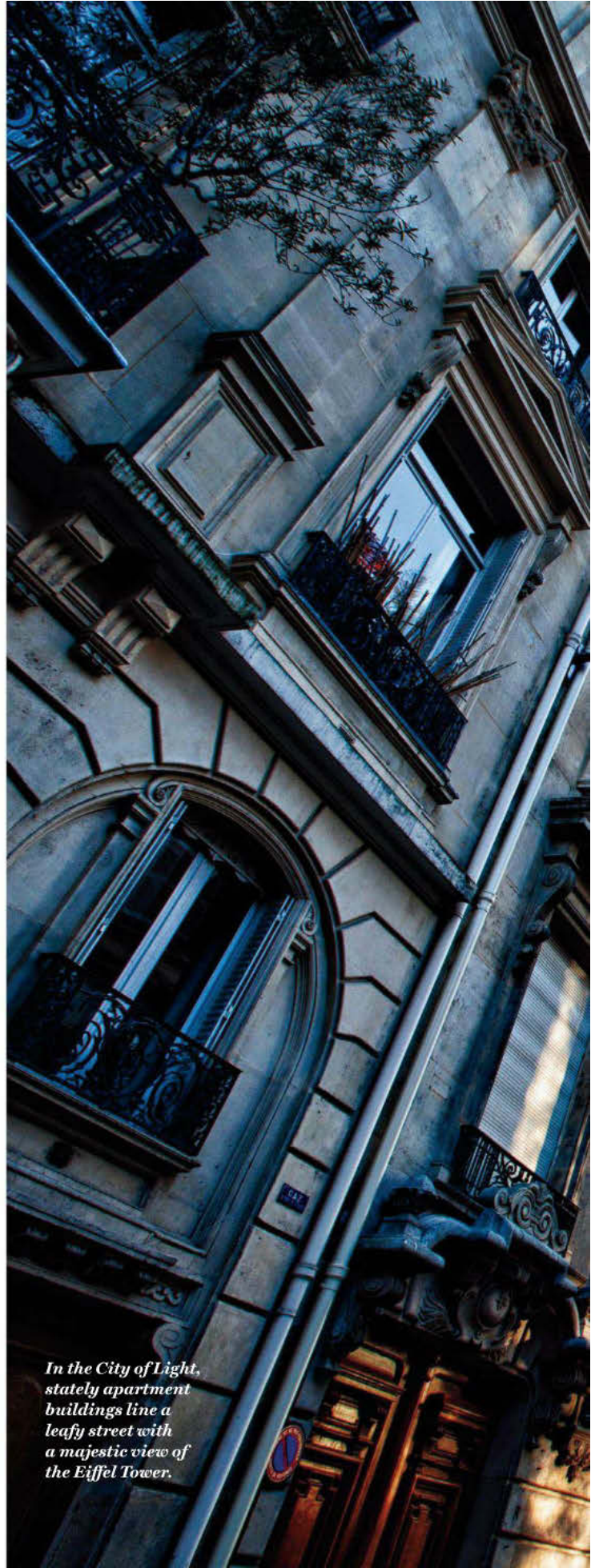
of the family and his exuberant fiancée with the perfect excuse to concoct elaborate picnics and parties, and by the middle of the summer, I had a new answer when people asked me what I was doing in Paris: “*J’étudie la bonne vie française*,” I’d say—I’m studying the good life, French style.

When I moved back for a second summer on the same program, everything was different. This time I had the confidence to tackle the city on my own, and having just graduated, I felt exhilaratingly untethered; life stretched before me like a grand boulevard of possibilities, all intriguing alleys and archways. After a withering week looking for lodging, I discovered a dream place on the fashionable Rue de Rivoli, just opposite the glorious green Jardin des Tuileries. I was supposed to stay confined to the former maid’s rooms in the interior of this sprawling apartment, but after a few days the owners left for a month on the Mediterranean, and that evening I found a way to unlock the door into the main salon. Towering French windows opened onto the Tuileries deepening into twilight, and as I gazed in wonder, the summer Ferris wheel’s lights began to blink like fireflies and the majestic sounds of an open-air orchestra swelled on the breeze.

Hungry in a way I’d never been before, I gorged on Paris. I watched Molière at the Comédie Française and the Ballet Béjart in the park; I idled among the secondhand shelves at Shakespeare and Co., eavesdropping on poets and poseurs; I immersed myself in Manet and Monet in the Musée d’Orsay; bobbed on a *bateau mouche* along the Seine; got lost in the ancient alleys of Montmartre and the Marais; stood stunned in stained-glass silence in Notre-Dame; savored the open-air theater from a sidewalk café on the Champs-Élysées; conjured Hemingway on Rue Descartes and Les Deux Magots café; and found my own dinner table at a boudoir-size bistro around the corner from my apartment, where I knew I’d arrived when the owner brought me my *bifteck-frites* and demi-carafe of house red wine without a word.

One evening I was walking home from work and came upon two college students from Alabama who were clearly lost. I helped the young women find their way back to their hotel, which turned out to be the hallowed Ritz. In gratitude their parents invited me to join them the next two nights, first for the famous duck dinner at the opulent Tour d’Argent—“one of the most expensive restaurants in Paris,” my envious colleagues told me the next day—and then for the flashy, fleshy fete at the Moulin Rouge, which somehow led to a Champagne-fueled soiree back at the Ritz, until the bells rang in the rosy dawn.

It was that kind of summer. I fell in love a few times, but of course,



In the City of Light, stately apartment buildings line a leafy street with a majestic view of the Eiffel Tower.



my real love was for Paris. I would wander its streets inebriated with the inexpressibly elegant avenues and facades, the arching bridges and graceful streetlamps, the laughter spilling out of bistros and bars, the musicians in the metro, the soft-lit windows in the grand apartments on the Île Saint-Louis, where I yearned to join the *soigné* citizens and their sophisticated repartee.

One morning halfway through my stay, I took my apartment building's rickety old filigreed elevator as usual from the fifth floor to the hushed shade of the ground-floor entryway, then stepped through the massive wooden doors into the street—and stopped. All around me people were speaking French, wearing French, acting French. Shrugging their shoulders and twirling their scarves and drinking their *cafés crèmes*, calling out “*Bonjour, monsieur-dame*” and paying for *Le Monde* or *Le Nouvel Observateur* with francs and stepping importantly around me and staring straight into my eyes and subtly smiling in a way that only the French do.

Until that summer, I had spent most of my life in classrooms, and I was planning after that six-month European detour to spend most of the rest of my life in classrooms. Suddenly it struck me: This was the classroom. Not the musty, ivy-draped halls in which I had spent the previous four years. This world of wide boulevards and centuries-old buildings and six-table sawdust restaurants and glasses of *vin ordinaire* and poetry readings in cramped second-floor bookshops and mysterious women smiling at you so that your heart leaped and you walked for hours restless under the plane trees by the Seine. This was the classroom.

In that moment, the seed of my future sprouted. Rather than write about literature, I would write about life in the world, beginning with a graduate course in *la bonne vie française*.

Editor at large DON GEORGE is the author of *The Lonely Planet Guide to Travel Writing* and the editor of numerous travel anthologies, including *A Moveable Feast* and *The Kindness of Strangers*.

Spirited Away in Kyoto

By PICO IYER

I FIRST ARRIVED IN KYOTO STATION, with my mother, in 1984: just a three-day layover en route to the countries that had enchanted me the year before, Thailand and Burma. We looked around—a buzzing, labyrinthine swirl of shops, private railway lines, snack bars, ticket machines, escalators; no signs in English in 1984, no obvious information booths—and felt like weeping. Slowly finding our way to the south exit, we got into a cab, the first in a long line, and asked its driver to take us to the New Miyako Hotel. Not to the man's delight, our nondescript destination turned out to be right across the street.

But it was mid-August, season of the Obon festival in Kyoto, when nearly everyone takes time off work to visit his home and say hello to departed ancestors. The eastern hills of Kyoto were lit up with lanterns leading to sprawling graveyards, their huge wooden gates suddenly thrown open and lit to lead ghosts home on the few days each year when, so it is traditionally believed, they can return to Earth to look in on their loved ones.

Jet-lagged, we walked through the lighted fields in a dream. Kyoto's young girls were in their *yukatas*, or silk kimonos; a festival air seemed to erase all the modern city's high-rises and taxis; the straight white-gravel paths between the trees might have been painted by Utagawa Hiroshige. For two long nights we lost ourselves in the illuminated throngs, and then five great bonfires, one after the other, blazed across the tops of the ancient capital's hills, to lead spirits back to their celestial places.

I'd always felt that Japan was my secret home. But going there during the festival of returning ghosts, at the age of 27, made me see that this was true. The realization was so piercing and powerful that, two years on, I left my glamorous-seeming job writing about world





Friends in Soweto gather for drinks and soak up the outdoor vibe at Sakhumzi Restaurant on historic Vilakazi Street. Opposite: Lanterns in Kyoto illuminate a graveyard during Obon season, a time dead ancestors are said to visit their families on Earth.

affairs for *Time* magazine in New York City and moved to Kyoto. A quarter of a century later, I'm still quite close to its eastern hills, in the suburbs of nearby Nara, looking forward to the next Obon and reminded daily that I recognize this foreign place—know it at the core—in a way I do not know the street on which I was born or the California house that's been my official home since boyhood.

The place that changed my life was the one that had been awaiting me since birth.

Novelist **PICO IYER**'s most recent book is *The Man Within My Head*.

Finding Peace in South Africa

By **ALEXANDRA FULLER**

IHAD GONE TO SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER 2009 in advance of the 2010 soccer World Cup, on assignment from a magazine to cover the preparations. But instead of touring the new calabash-inspired stadium, I spent my first morning in Soweto at the Hector Pieterse museum, in the Regina Mundi church where rioting black students had fled from police during the 1976 Soweto uprising, and touring the house once lived in by Nelson and Winnie Mandela on Vilakazi Street. "The bullet holes from attacks on the house are still visible here in the wall," one sign read.

I'd been raised north of the Limpopo River in neighboring Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where we'd had our own version of apartheid and where the black population had undertaken its own struggle against

minority rule. My parents had fought with Ian Smith's government to keep Rhodesia white-ruled. So although Soweto—even the very word—evoked all that had been most unjust and violent about those decades in South Africa, this was my broken history too, as seen from the other side.

Walking out of the Mandelas' house, I came blinking into the bright sunlight, feeling shattered. I appreciated the bullet-pocked buildings for what they said about conflict: that regardless of intent, innocent people will become its victims, and because of this, there is no undoing violence. It has a forever afterlife.

I returned to my small bed-and-breakfast. It was steamy hot, and thunderclouds massed on the horizon. I fell asleep and dreamt deeply in the stillness of the afternoon, dreams electric with memorialized violence. But I awoke to the familiar noises and smells of my rural Rhodesian childhood: dogs barking, cockerels shrieking, the owners of the inn making tea in the kitchen.

That evening I chatted with neighbors until some of them invited me to a nearby café for stew and cold beers. Soweto—the place that had borne the brunt of so much horror—felt much safer than Johannesburg. It's not perfect, of course. There are still illegal settlements and ordinary badness. Seeing that a version of suburban tranquillity can be built on the bedrock of such oppression and violence made me realize there is hope for people everywhere. We don't need to live in our past, or accept the present. We can create a singular future of peace and optimism. It's a choice.

ALEXANDRA FULLER's latest African memoir, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, was released in paperback in June.

Morocco, 1963—A boy guides his sibling along a narrow street in the Tangier medina. Opposite: Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is home to a few hundred mountain gorillas, which are typically shy and gentle.



My Grandfather in Tangier

By TAHIR SHAH

MY EARLIEST MEMORY IS OF an overpowering scent of orange blossom and of sunlight filtered through palm fronds, in my grandfather's garden in Tangier. It's one of those memories that formed the bedrock of my childhood, something so powerful that it's nailed to my soul.

My grandfather was an Afghan writer and savant who moved to the north of Morocco in the early 1960s. His wife had just died of cancer, and he yearned to be in a place where they had never been together. With a panorama out over the Strait of Gibraltar, and a hazy view of Spain, Tangier was a crossroads between East and West and the perfect place to escape.

There was a sense of danger, of faded grandeur, and of immense possibility. Back then, Tangier was a haven for stoned beatniks and hippies, for draft dodgers, fugitives, and philosophers.

We would visit my grandfather often, swapping the sedate security of the English countryside for the enchanted lanes of Tangier's labyrinth. Clasp his hand tight, I would stumble along beside him, wide-eyed and spellbound by the frenetic stew of humanity. He would take me to the bazaar, which he said was a keyhole into another time.

And it was.

There were fishermen laying out the morning's catch, their baskets of glinting sardines circled by expectant cats. And there were melons as big as cannonballs, cages crammed with frantic chickens, and heaps of contraband from across the strait.

On the way back through the twisting lanes, we would pass the magicians' shops. I liked them best of all. Dried chameleons were being weighed out, sold in twists of newspaper to a huddle of veiled women who couldn't get enough. And we would pass the endless cafés, each one packed with a clutch of grizzled old men in hooded

djellaba robes. They'd be playing cards, telling tall tales, or drawing slowly on slender ceramic pipes, oblivious to the world outside.

My grandfather's villa stood at 71 Rue de la Plage. It was small and elegant, with a pair of twin staircases spiraling to the second floor. The gate to the street was rusted iron, a canopy of fragrant honeysuckle and blazing bougainvillea running between it and the house. We would sit in the courtyard garden's shade, intoxicated by the heady scent of orange blossom, my grandfather telling of his journeys in Arabia half a lifetime before. From time to time he would get up and saunter into the house, reemerging with a random object. One day he opened his palm and showed me a nugget of twisted bronze, the size of a hen's egg. "Here's a piece from a Spanish galleon that I picked up down there on the beach. Keep it safe always, and it will always keep you safe," my grandfather said.

Three weeks later, while he was fumbling for his key at the rusted iron gate, a Coca-Cola truck that was backing up knocked him down. He died instantly, leaving me feeling hollow inside.

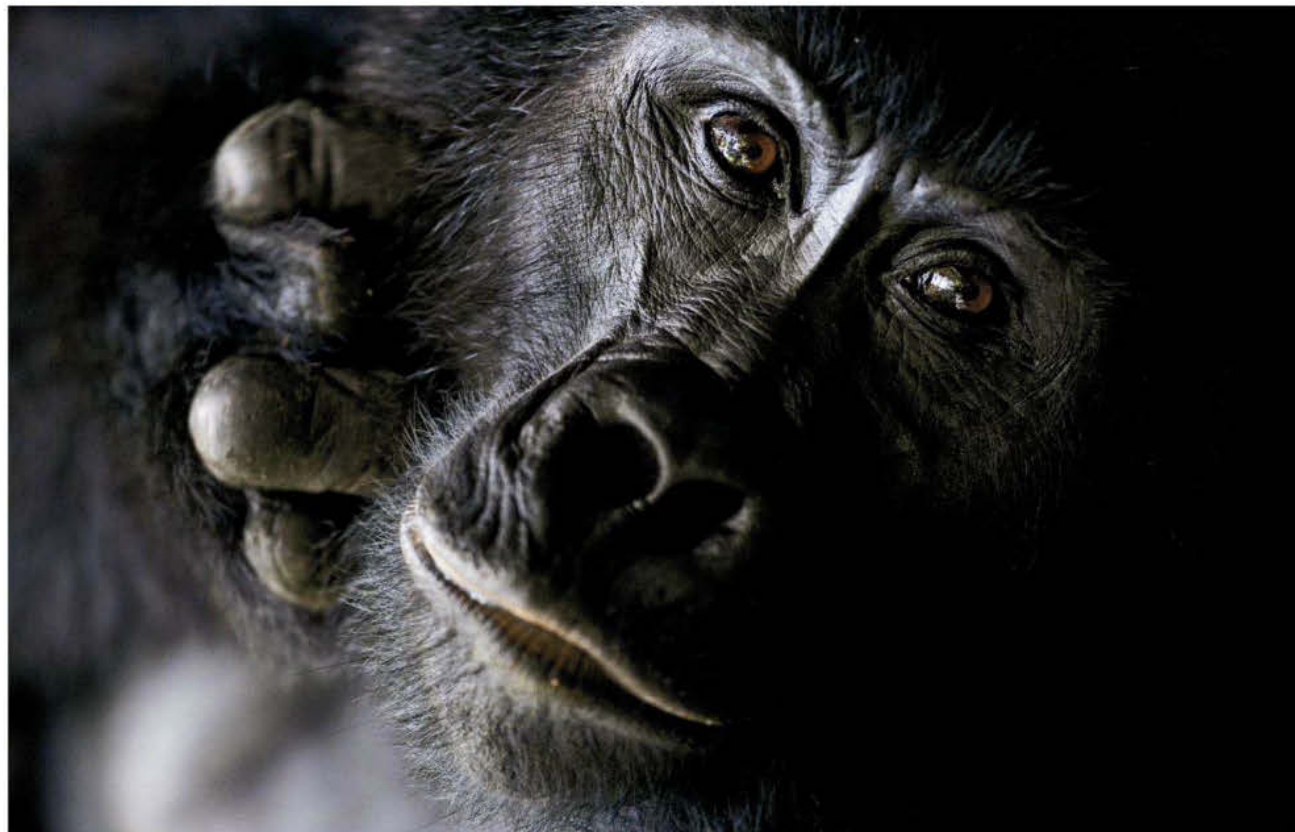
Last April I drove up to Tangier with my own children, from our home in Casablanca. Those first memories of Morocco had worked their spell, luring us to move to the kingdom eight years ago.

We took a chance and knocked at the iron gate on Rue de la Plage. As I was pulled inside the courtyard by an elderly maid, I caught the pungent fragrance of orange blossom and honeysuckle. My eyes welled tears, not from the scent but from the memory. In my pocket was the lump of twisted bronze my grandfather had given me 40 years before. As I crossed the threshold, I held it tight.

We toured the house, and I pictured the silhouette of an old man sitting in the garden, palm fronds throwing shadows over whitewashed walls.

My little son, Timur, asked why I was so quiet. "Because I have come full circle," I said.

TAHIR SHAH is a British travel writer and novelist who lives in a haunted mansion set in the middle of a Casablanca shantytown.



MICHAEL POLLIZA/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK, ROGER WOOD/CORBIS (OPPOSITE PAGE)

A nomadic herding family traverses a grassy plain in search of water, which will be transported on their bullock cart, in the north of Inner Mongolia.



Letting Go in Uganda

By ANN HOOD

FOR 18 YEARS, WHENEVER I LOOKED beside me on a plane or car or train, my son, Sam, was there smiling up at me. I wanted to raise him to be adventurous, curious, a world traveler like me. Together we climbed temples in Cambodia, sailed Lake Titicaca, gazed at the Taj Mahal.

In that spirit, to celebrate his high school graduation, we went to Uganda to volunteer in schools in its capital, Kampala. Just before we left for our trip, college acceptances began to arrive. Sam had been by my side for millions of miles, yet he was about to embark on a journey where I naturally had to be left behind. We had traveled a lot of emotional miles too. Nine years earlier, his sister Grace had died, and Sam and I had navigated that journey together.

Now that his departure for college was imminent, I wondered how I could ever let him go.

Our weekends in Uganda were spent out of the city at national

parks, tracking chimpanzees and stopping our Land Rover to allow a herd of elephants to pass. We saved our biggest adventure for last: a trip to the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, home to half the world's population of remaining mountain gorillas—about 340.

It was raining hard the night we arrived. "Tomorrow morning," our guide told us, "you'll hike for six hours through mud. The ranger will have a machete to cut through the vines and a gun to protect you from lions and poachers." He smiled. "But then you will see the gorillas." As soon as the guide left, I told Sam that this was a bad idea. We'd seen everything from baboons to warthogs. It would be OK to skip this. "You're the one who taught me to go everywhere and try everything," he said, disappointed. "You can't back out." How could I explain my fear to him? Not just of the danger in the jungle but of sending him into the world without me?

The next morning, in a steady rain, we spotted mountain gorillas within minutes. The ranger pointed to a 400-pound male, known as a silverback, approaching us. Our group squeezed close together as instructed. The gorilla walked down our tight line, pausing, then moving on. Until he reached me. He began to grunt and stomp.

PALANI MOHAN/GETTY IMAGES



Then he walked behind me and punched me in the back, hard, sending me airborne. In the chaos that ensued, I heard Sam yell, “Mom!” Before I hit the ground, my son’s strong arms caught me and held me close before carefully letting me go. Our eyes met, and we both began to laugh. In that moment, I knew that Sam would be fine. And so would I.

ANN HOOD is the author of the best-selling novels *The Knitting Circle* and *The Red Thread* and the memoir *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief*.

Steppe by Steppe in Mongolia

By **STANLEY STEWART**

OUTER MONGOLIA SHAPED MY LIFE years before I set foot in the country landlocked in Central Asia. In a long traveling career, across more than 50 countries, Mongolia was the journey that I had always wanted to make, and

for a long time never quite reached.

I had the excuse of legitimate enterprise. Mongolia was a rare place—virtually the last place—where nomadic life still thrived. Across the vast grasslands of a country nearly two-and-a-half times the size of Texas, horses and tents and seasonal migrations remained a way of life. But my real impulse for Mongolia was more personal. I saw the journey as a matter of loyalty to my 12-year-old self. This is the journey he had dreamed of making: by horse in a virgin landscape. Other destinations came and went, but the dream of Mongolia persisted.

I was in my 40s when I finally came to Mongolia. I had decided to cross the country by horse, a thousand miles from the mountains of the Altay in the west to the forests of Hentiy in the east. I traveled in the spirit of the emissaries of Genghis Khan, changing horses and guides every three or four days, carrying all I needed on a packhorse, enjoying the open hospitality of the nomads when it was available, camping alone in high empty valleys when it wasn’t.

I had made horse journeys before—Wyoming, Argentina, India, Spain—but here at last was a place where such a journey was



Gloria Root II

entirely natural, where horses were still the primary means of transportation, where you could ride for days without encountering a town or a road or a fence. The landscapes had a startling simplicity; Mongolia seemed to have been sculpted by winds. Here and there across the unfolding grasslands, round white tents sprouted as mysteriously as mushrooms. Between them horsemen cantered on distant horizons.

Childhood dreams can be dangerous things. But Mongolia was everything I had hoped, a dream journey. In the end I think it was a question of timing. I had waited half a lifetime for Mongolia only to arrive, fortuitously, at the moment I was best equipped to appreciate it. Any older, I might have found five months in the saddle too arduous. Any younger and I would not have taken such pleasure in those innocent landscapes, in the grasslands' wonderful solitudes, in the rich hospitality of nomads. Nor would I have understood Mongolia as a kind of homecoming.

British writer **STANLEY STEWART** is the author of *In the Empire of Genghis Khan: A Journey Among Nomads*.

Reborn in the Bay Area

By ELLEN GILCHRIST

I WAS IN MY 40S AND LIVING IN ARKANSAS when I made my first trip to the West Coast. Until then I didn't understand why anyone would want to sleep anywhere but in her own bed or her grandmother's house. A friend, painter Ginny Stanford, moved there in 1980 and began to write me letters full of brilliant descriptions of San Francisco and Berkeley, tales of bookstores full of art and poetry, of movie theaters that played films from all over the world, of a new boyfriend who had built a house powered by solar panels, of bridges like palaces, and flowers that bloomed year-round. She begged me to come visit, to see the Asian Art Museum, the teahouse in Golden Gate Park, and Peet's Coffee and Tea.

She sent me photographs of her new paintings, people dressed in fantastic kimonos she had bought in Chinatown.

In Fayetteville, Arkansas, we had one theater that sometimes showed films by Federico Fellini or Alain Resnais, but the projector wasn't very good and you couldn't always read the subtitles. We didn't have a theater that showed foreign films nonstop and into the wee hours of the night. "You must go," my Jungian psychoanalyst kept saying. "There is a statue of Shakyamuni as an ascetic in the Avery Brundage Collection that is the most perfect statue of the Buddha in the world. It is very small," he continued. "Only ten and a half inches tall, but you will never forget it."

A few weeks later I caught a morning flight to San Francisco. As soon as I landed, Ginny threw my bag into her small station wagon and we took off to Berkeley to eat dinner and then drive 30 miles to a theater that was playing *Cinema Paradiso* by Giuseppe Tornatore, the 11 p.m. showing.

The next morning we had coffee at Peet's and began to walk around Berkeley. I was walking very slowly. I had to stop and read all the telephone poles, with their posters and notices and poems, invitations to join protests and groups I didn't know existed. We visited all the great bookstores in town. We saw films by Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Marcel Pagnol. We saw *Nights of Cabiria*, *La Dolce Vita*, and Chinese films. We went to the de Young Museum, and Ginny wept when she saw "Still Life: Vase With Irises Against a Yellow Background," by Vincent van Gogh, on loan from the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

We went to see "The Buddha Shakyamuni as an Ascetic," and I was not disappointed. It is emblazoned in my mind, the back of the statue as beautiful as the front and sides.

Patrons at the Foreign Cinema in San Francisco enjoy an alfresco candlelight dinner and a film projected on a wall.

It was being in the presence of the statue of Buddha that made me begin to like to travel. Of course it was also the people and voices and smells and weather and mountains and oceans that I needed to experience. It has made me a better and deeper reader and writer. Now that I'm 77 years old and pretty much back in my stay-at-home mode, it is a great joy to me to remember having seen so many cities and countries. The world is so big. I wish I had seen more of it.

Winner of the National Book Award, **ELLEN GILCHRIST** is the author of more than 20 books. Her most recent novel is *A Dangerous Age*.

Finding a Lost Soul in Mexico

By FRANCES MAYES

WHEN I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW and saw a pilgrimage line of shirtless men flagellating themselves with rope whips, I knew I was in alien territory. Flocks of snowy egrets nested in the swaying tops of trees, and kitty-corner below was the desolate Benito Juárez park, where women still washed their clothes in a stone trough. After years in a marriage gone sour, I was traveling alone. Like others before me I was an escapee into Mexico, a good place to stand between one's past and future. I rented a house for the whole summer in San Miguel de Allende. Then it was not full of foreigners and gussied up, as it is now. Then it was more Mexico as you dream it—someone playing guitar on the church steps, stoic faces, women making tamales at the market, battered buses, fiestas with fireworks, blue doors open to leafy courtyards. Let the marriage burn off me, I thought. I will translate myself into a new language, a new place.

I made friends with a woman who had a child by a matador but she did not tell the father. A stream of friends came and went. I didn't confess to them that I'd seen a mouse run under the guest bed at night. I bought armfuls of tuberose that scented the shuttered house. A man on a donkey delivered warm milk from a tin jug. I bought it and then, fearing undulant fever, poured it out. My guests and I loved the thermal springs, the mummies in Guanajuato, the promenade in the *jardín* at evening, the spare beauty of Querétaro. I jumped on and off rickety yellow buses with religious icons dangling from the rearview mirror.

Every day for five hours I went to Spanish class. My teacher, Raoul, was a tiny man in cowboy boots. Soon we became friends and started taking field trips to practice Spanish in larger settings. He had a friend with a worn taxi who drove us to old churches with elaborate painted walls—and more pilgrims whipping themselves. We stopped at stands selling roasted corn with lime. We drove off road, through hard fields, and searched for pottery fragments from the early inhabitants, the Chichimeca people. I found a terra-cotta plate with only a pie-slice piece missing. My Spanish, I thought, was becoming fluent.

One day, wandering in an abandoned cemetery, we saw four boys playing. Their ball was a human skull. I grabbed it away from them. The skull was a small child's, permanent teeth still embedded above baby teeth. The jagged fontanel looked like the graph on an EKG.

Raoul began to confess that he was trapped, would never get out of teaching Spanish to people who only visited like locusts in season. He cried over the fate of the lost-to-time Chichimecas. The house behind mine was torn down, and droves of mice exited the foundations. When I came downstairs one morning, the kitchen counters were covered in mice. Maria, the housecleaner, came in clapping her hands and shouting for poison. We cleaned the house until the tiles gleamed and the wood shone. I was ready to go back to California to face my new life. I packed the skull in the center of my suitcase and brought that lost soul home with me.

FRANCES MAYES's most recent book, co-authored with her husband, Ed, is *The Tuscan Sun Cookbook: Recipes From Our Italian Kitchen*.



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BY CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

Traveler's consumer advocate, columnist, and editor at large

COME ON, GET APPY

Forget the Swiss Army knife. Equip your trip with these 8 smartphone tools



WORLDIMATE

The 24/7 travel agent

Organize every detail of your trip, from airline schedules to hotel itineraries. Find destination-specific info, enlist the help of its currency converter and tip calculator, and get directions.

BONUS: Syncs to your social network. (iPhone and Android, free)

SKYPE (pictured)

The global phone plan

Turn your Internet connection into a phone or videoconferencing device. Using a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, message or call another Skype user for free, or call a phone for a small fee (varies by country).

BONUS: Delivers clear voice quality. (iPhone and Android, free)

TADAA

The photo projector

Apply sophisticated filters and borders, then share them quickly with your friends. This HD app emphasizes photography as art, so that moody shot of the Brooklyn Bridge is sure to get a string of comments.

BONUS: It's faster and easier than Instagram. (iPhone only, free)

WEATHER LIVE

The crystal ball

Stay tuned to the local weather while on the go. This app displays only the information you need and senses when you've changed location. Animations illustrate real-time conditions.

BONUS: An icon gives the current temp, making wardrobe decisions a snap. (iPhone only, \$1.99)

WORLD CLOCK

The time-zone buster

Monitor the current time in up to eight different places at once. Scroll through a world map that shows day and night (plus sunrise and sunset times).

BONUS: With an Internet connection, the time is accurate within less than a second—or the app alerts you if the time is off. (iPhone only, \$1.99)

PROCAMERA

The darkroom

Fine-tune your photos and videos with separate focus and exposure controls for each, so you can easily eliminate washed-out backgrounds. It also has a timer and solid lighting choices.

BONUS: Comes with a QR code reader, which scans matrix bar codes. (iPhone only, \$2.99)

GOOGLE TRANSLATE

The interpreter

Translate text between 64 languages with the top-rated translation app.

BONUS: Interprets speech fairly accurately for 17 languages, including Arabic, Russian, and German. Remember to speak clearly for best results. (Android, free)

LOOK, NO WIRES!
NEW, PORTABLE
"MI-FI" DEVICES
OFFER WI-FI
ON THE GO.



WEBMD

The mobile ER

Check symptoms by body part on ills ranging from dehydration to toe pain, useful when you're trying to determine if or when to put a hold on sightseeing to seek treatment. You can also identify pills by shape and color, and read up on drug side effects.

BONUS: Emergency first aid tips are accessible even while offline. (iPhone and Android, free)

LEAD THE PACK

Zen and the art of packing—smarter, leaner, and more efficient



Rules of the Load

As *Traveler's* Digital Nomad, **Andrew Evans** travels 200 days a year (follow him on Twitter, @WheresAndrew). Roaming from Antarctica to Malawi has taught him a few rules to pack by (as well as five items to take no matter what, shown at right).

- 1 Buy it there:** Your favorite hair gel isn't worth the hassle at the airport.
- 2 Color-code:** Electrical tape matches up gadgets with cords and chargers.
- 3 Think beyond the roll-aboard:** Go with a soft duffel bag on safari, a garment bag for formal dress, or one shared suitcase for a couple.
- 4 Take two (pairs of shoes):** Wear the heavier ones on the plane.
- 5 Live recyclable:** Donate old clothing and books after using them.

Essentials for Nomads



- 1** Evans's Persol **sunglasses** stay put in all weather.



- 2** Yes, Evans still uses paper. He embarks on each new adventure with a fresh Moleskine **ruled journal**.



- 3** Clipped to his belt loop is always a **carabiner watch** with LED light.

- 4** His LaCie Rugged **external hard drive** (in rubber) is roughly the size of a sandwich.



- 5** Evans swaps his wallet for a slim Malcolim Frontier **card sleeve** in his front pocket.

Ready, Set, Gear Up

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIKER



Think in threes: Pile on a base layer (form-fitting, fast-drying), warming layer (sweater, fleece), and light shell (wind/rain jacket). **Stick in the mud:**

A collapsible hiking pole buoys stamina. **Go au naturel:** Lightweight wool doesn't hold odor or wetness as some synthetics do. **Don't get bottled up:** Stay hydrated wearing a water bladder with drinking tube. **Do:** Bring convertible zip-off pants. **Don't:** Wear denim. —Boyd Matson, National Geographic Weekend radio host

THE AFRICAN SAFARI GOER



Good chemistry: New insect-repellent fabrics last for 70 washes but can be uncomfortable; opt for whatever makes you most comfortable.

How low can you go: Power at safari camps is spotty. Carry a flashlight and low-light binoculars. **Do:** Bring a hat (wide-brimmed for walking/boating, baseball cap for game drives). **Don't:** Wear whites or brights, which can both attract and scare wildlife. —Steve Boyes, National Geographic Expeditions Africa expert

THE URBAN CULTURE VULTURE



Does not compute: Bulky in the city is not a good look—leave the laptop at home. **Clothes call:** Pack a lightweight rain pullover that can slip into a

pocket or purse. **Do:** Bring a pair of foam earplugs. Towns and cities can be noisy at night, from church bells and motorbikes to carousers. **Don't:** Carry a conspicuous foldout map. Instead, make photocopies of detailed street maps. —Tim Jepson, National Geographic Traveler Italy guidebook author

EXTRA!

For the supremely organized—or clueless—traveler, these apps can digitally enhance any pack list... **PACKING PRO:** Assemble to-do lists and find packing tips based on climate, itinerary, and number of people in your travel party. Bonus: Syncs with “the cloud” and allows collaboration. (iPhone only, \$2.99) **EVERNOTE:** Create and manage sophisticated lists and itineraries, save voice reminders (“note to self: don't forget granola bars for the plane ride”), and share photos across multiple devices. (iPhone and Android, free)

FIX YOUR TRIP

Become your own advocate with these insider secrets



BOOKING TRAPS

1 Holding out for lower airfare? Airfares change quickly, and even an airline can't predict whether prices will go up or down (it's all handled by sophisticated programs). So relax. If you see a price you can afford, buy the ticket and don't look back. But if you must, use a service like Yapta (www.yapta.com) to track your fare difference.

2 Booking for miles/points? Ads and popular online discussion groups encourage selecting a destination, hotel, or airline with an eye toward collecting the most points and miles. But it rarely benefits you, the traveler, as much as it does the airline or hotel. Don't get drawn in. Cut up those affinity cards and instead participate in a bank rewards program, such as the Capital One credit card, that allots points or miles for every dollar spent.

3 Double booking? Double trouble: You're booking online, and your browser freezes—or so you think. The booking can still go through, and if you hit "submit" again, you'll end up with two tickets or rooms. The good news: You often have 24 hours to cancel. The bad? You might not realize you've double booked until it's too late. If your screen freezes during a booking, call your online agent to see if it went through, wait 24 hours, then rebook.



6 Hotel pool closed? You may have grounds for a room credit. Ask nicely at the front desk about receiving compensation for amenities that were promised but not delivered, but be realistic; a resort won't tear up your bill because the pool wasn't open. It might, however, throw in a free breakfast.

4 Overwhelmed by options? "Low fare guarantees" have too much fine print to bother. Same goes with "bidding" for your trip (most folks end up overpaying). And always shop around: Like any store, online travel agencies (Orbitz, Expedia) don't show every airline, hotel, or service.

HOTEL WOES

5 Missing reservation? Don't make a new booking, at least not yet. Call your agent

or the hotel. If they can't find it, they should be able to replace your reservation at no additional cost. If you're still charged for the first room—say, by a third party like a travel agency—dispute the amount immediately (within 60 days) on your credit card.

7 Noisy neighbors? Call the hotel operator to complain about the decibel levels, or go to the front desk in person. If they can't fix it, ask to be moved. If necessary,

appeal to the manager. Worst-case scenario: Check out of the hotel and demand a refund.

8 Room without a view? If your room isn't the one you paid for, ask to be moved. If the hotel is out of rooms, you can ask for an upgrade or to have your reservation transferred to a comparable hotel (it's called "walking"), at no extra charge.

UNFRIENDLY SKIES

9 Missing ticket or ticket segment? Call your travel agent immediately, or, if it's a direct booking, your airline. You shouldn't have to pay to get rerouted. Don't buy a new ticket—odds are, you won't get your money back.

10 Canceled flight? Get in line at the gate counter, but also pull out your smartphone to call the airline and, at the same time, try to rebook yourself online. You can often fix the problem before you get to the desk. Remember: Airlines won't cover expenses for weather cancellations, but if it's a



EXTRA!

Consider these apps "cruise control"... **AAA TRIPTIK MOBILE:** Find hotels, eateries, attractions, and gas stations—plus prices, vacancies, and diesel fuel and charging stations—in close proximity while on the road. (iPhone and Android, free) **FLIGHTVIEW:** Track flights going to or from North American airports, view air traffic delays, and receive flight status alerts. (iPhone and Android, free) **WHEELMAP:** Identify which businesses and train stations are accessible to people with disabilities. (iPhone and Android, free)

mechanical or operational delay, you'll likely stay at a hotel on their dime.

11 Lost seat assignment? If the gate agent can't sort out the issue, appeal to a flight attendant after you've boarded. Politely. The sooner you're in the system with a request, the likelier you'll get a seat. In the unlikely event you're bumped from the flight, be aware that you're due cash compensation under federal law (up to \$1,300 for more than a two-hour delay on domestic flights or more than a four-hour delay on international flights).

12 Overbooked flight? Don't volunteer (unless you want to). Wait to be bumped, when the compensation is richer—up to \$1,300 to cover meals and overnight accommodations. Keep in mind that volunteers can negotiate perks but are not entitled to anything until the airline has no choice but to deny a seat.

13 Lost luggage? Don't assume your suitcase is gone forever just because it doesn't show up on the conveyor belt. Airlines claim most misplaced baggage is eventually reunited with customers; the industry line is that just 2 percent of bags fail to find their way home. Make a beeline to the airline office to fill out a lost-luggage form (you might have as few as four hours to file a claim). There you should also receive a phone number for tracking your bag as well as an amount you can spend on replacement clothes and toiletries (ask if this isn't offered). If your luggage is found, the airlines must deliver it at your convenience—not theirs. If the bag doesn't resurface, be prepared to show receipts to support claims, and review the Montreal Convention to make sure you aren't being shortchanged (www.dot.gov).



19 Mechanical difficulties? If you pop a tire on a rental car, call the rental company, not AAA. The company is responsible for transporting you and your broken-down car back to the rental location and providing you with a working set of wheels. Document the breakdown in writing so you aren't blamed.

14 Sick of long lines? The Transportation Security Administration's new PreCheck program fast-tracks travelers in exchange for undergoing a voluntary prescreening. (Bonus: Shoes stay tied and your laptop stays in its case.) PreCheck is currently available for certain frequent fliers at more than a dozen U.S. airports; find the growing list at www.tsa.gov.

BUMPY CRUISING

15 Didn't pack a passport? Some cruises stop in international ports but don't require a passport; however,

such "closed loop" cruises are the exception. You should always pack this essential document (you'd be surprised how many would-be cruisers don't). Getting an emergency passport isn't much of an option. Even if you have a bit of time and are near a passport agency, you would have to prove that it's a "life or death" emergency—a serious illness, injury, or death in your immediate family that requires travel within 24 to 48 hours.

16 Sinking in fees? Onboard extras add up, from eating in specialty

AIRPORT
SECURITY RULES
CAN CHANGE
ABRUPTLY. KEEP
UP AT TSA.GOV.

restaurants to playing arcade games. Eliminate your kids' spending power: Ask the check-in desk to disable their key cards, which double as credit cards.

CAR TALK

17 No compact cars available? The industry-wide policy is to offer a free upgrade if the company runs out of cars in the class you reserved. A rental agent may try to pressure you to buy an upgrade or warn of a lengthy wait time. Don't fall for it. Insist on the car you asked for, or a free upgrade.

18 Charged for extras? Read your bill carefully. If there's something on it you don't recognize, talk to a manager. Once you leave the lot, fixing your bill gets much harder. Among the "gotchas": fuel purchase options and collision-damage waiver or loss-waiver policies. Watch what you circle and initial.

20 Stopped at the border? Produce can slow you down in and out of California or Hawaii (leave the pineapple at the plantation). Keep IDs handy; children traveling with only one parent should bring a note from the other. And behave—the place to note displeasure is in a letter to Congress or at the ballot box.



TRAVEL WELL

Exploring the world in sickness and in health



Ask the Nurse

A traveler ventures into a snake cave on the Indonesian island of Flores and is bitten by an angry python while standing waist-deep in bat guano. An old *Indiana Jones* plot? Nah, it's just one true-life challenge deftly handled by **Karen Barry**, the unflappable nurse for the National Geographic Society. From HQ in Washington, D.C., Barry is charged with keeping explorers safe and free of disease in every corner of the globe, from Papua New Guinea to the jungles of Peru. Here she answers your travel wellness questions.

I just booked a safari/Amazon boat trip/Himalaya expedition. Now what? Visit a travel medicine clinician at least one month prior to departure. A consultation will include risk assessment, which takes into account your exact itinerary—specific cities, types of accommodations, seasons, style of travel.

I love street food, but it doesn't always love me. How can I avoid Delhi belly (traveler's diarrhea)? Remember the golden rule about food: Boil it, peel it, cook it—or forget it. Wash hands often, and carry hand sanitizer. Don't

eat raw veggies washed in water or anything in which water has (or may have) been added, such as juices or fruit sold by weight. Still, you may get diarrhea anyway. Before leaving, ask your physician for an antibiotic. If meds don't help, you could have a parasite and should report symptoms to a doctor.

How can I stay malaria-free? Mosquitoes feed from dusk to

dawn. Stay in well-screened areas, use insecticide-treated bed nets, and cover up. Travel clinicians can identify which medications are effective in the specific areas you're visiting, as resistance to some drugs has developed in parts of the world. Bring a map of where you're going. No detail is too small.

I have itchy bug bites, and my knees hurt. Do I have malaria? Probably not, but it's true that joint pain can be a warning sign of malaria. Same with flu-like symptoms, fever, headache, and fatigue. Symptoms can develop as early as seven days after exposure to the *Anopheles* mosquito bite. Severe cases can cause seizures, mental confusion, kidney failure, coma,

even death—so report any concerns immediately.

How do I deal with motion sickness? Stay away from alcohol and heavy, spicy, or fatty foods before and during travel; avoid strong odors; find a part of the plane or boat that's less bumpy, like the area over the wing on an aircraft. Low cabins near the center of the vessel generally rock less. Bonine helps and is sold over the counter.

What about altitude sickness? Climb high, sleep low, and rest every couple of days. Avoid alcohol, stay hydrated, and eat a high-carb diet. Start out slow. Treat headaches with over-the-counter nonaspirin painkillers. And never ascend with symptoms.

TRAVELERS TO HIGH-RISK AREAS SHOULD CONSULT CDC.GOV BEFORE DEPARTURE.

(Pre) Parting Shots

Traveling can mean getting cozy with needles and pills. The good news? Vaccines open up the world, safely.



DISEASE	WHAT TO KNOW	HOW TO PREVENT IT
Malaria	A 17th-century tonic for this flu-like illness was quinine extracted from cinchona tree bark.	Varies by area/length of stay; malarone pill most common.
Hepatitis A	Cases of the most common hepatitis virus are at historic lows in the U.S. Globally, outbreak sources have ranged from scallions to oysters.	Two-shot series lasts 20 years. Complete first shot at least 2 weeks prior. \$60-300.
Typhoid	In the early 1900s, an outbreak of this fever in New York traced back to a domestic servant who was famously nicknamed Typhoid Mary.	Shot (lasts 2 years) or pills (lasts 5 years). Complete 1-2 weeks prior. \$85-300.
Rabies	Its name meaning "madness," this fatal viral disease's calling card is foaming at the mouth.	Three-shot series. \$500-1,200.

The Ultimate First Aid Kit

Aluminum splint: Get one with an elastic bandage for wrapping arm and leg sprains, strains, and fractures. It's lightweight, moldable, and has multiple treatment uses.

Emergency eye wash: Extensive outdoor exposure and wind can be brutal. How will you admire the Sahara with sand in your eyes?

Sunscreen, SPF lip balm, and insect repellent (with DEET): Also, select fabrics and bed nets treated with permethrin insecticide.

Plus: Don't skimp on **medical evacuation insurance.** Read the policy carefully, and pay attention to arrangements made with hospitals to guarantee payments directly. A good policy should also offer a 24/7 call center with physician support and emergency medical assistance.

Oral rehydration solution packets: Recover from dehydration and traveler's diarrhea. These salts can be a lifesaver in the event of prolonged exposure to heat or fluid loss.

Prescription medications: Bring an extra prescription in case you need a refill. Keep everything in the original containers.

Headlamp and duct tape: Because you never know.

Pain relief: Your pills of choice can help zap ailments ranging from jet lag to sore legs.

Gloves and hand sanitizer: Repeat after us: Germs and bacteria, be gone.

Tweezers and scissors: Cut gauze bandages, and remove ticks, leeches, and any other pesky intruders.

Moleskin, gauze, and large bandages: Soothe blisters (antifungal cream helps, too). If your feet hurt, everything hurts.

Water filters and Potable Aqua tablets: Make mystery water drinkable.

Antiseptics and antibiotic ointment: Clean and treat cuts, abrasions, lacerations, and bug bites.

Epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen): Even those without allergies might consider asking for a prescription, as local foods, plants, or bites could trigger a reaction. For minor irritations, pack Benadryl and a bite-relief pen.

When you're far out of your insurance network, these apps can keep you in the health loop ... **iTRIAGE:** Find local hospitals and clinics and view health records and connect with your pharmacy to track prescriptions. (iPhone and Android, free) **ARMY FIRST AID:** Peek into the U.S. Army manual, which offers battlefield solutions for everything from bee stings to trauma. (iPhone only, \$1.99) **HEALTHMAP:** Stay abreast of—and avoid—outbreaks of diseases such as swine flu and nipah virus. (iPhone and Android, free)

PICTURE THIS

Shoot photo and video souvenirs like a pro



Behind the Lens

In the age of Instagram, everyone's a photographer. But a few simple tricks still make snapshots actually worth showing off. *Traveler* senior photo editor **Dan Westergren** offers his top three tips.

1. Understand light. Get going before sunrise; everything photographs better in the first few hours of daylight. If you're with family, either persuade them to witness the magic of early light, or sneak out of the hotel and bring breakfast back so they can appreciate your early morning disappearances.

2. Turn off the flash. There's nothing like an ill-considered camera flash for ruining a beautiful scene. Most digital cameras do well enough at high ISO settings that use of the on-camera flash can be reduced or eliminated altogether. Learn how to turn your flash off, and take a few pictures with flash and a few without. Comparing versions side by side

can help you determine when the flash helps and when it hurts. As a general rule, switch the camera from the "auto" setting—which seems to trigger the flash to go off most of the time—to "program."

3. It's still worth it to carry a "real" camera. Even the least expensive DSLR cameras, which are quite small and lightweight, have much better image quality than most point-and-shoot cameras. For lighter traveling, I recommend a new category of cameras called mirror-less, or EVIL (electronic viewfinder interchangeable lens). Look for micro four-thirds by Olympus and Panasonic (pictured, right) or the NEX series by Sony. EVIL cameras have a relatively large sensor (translation: better images) but are smaller than DSLR cameras. As for the iPhone: great for snapshots and social media but not a replacement camera. Blown up, phone photos usually disappoint.

**CARRY LENS
TISSUE AND A
ZIPLOCK BAG (TO
WATERPROOF IN
A PINCH).**

The Right Stuff

For shutterbugs on the move, precious luggage space once taken up by rolls of film is now a mess of cords, camera cards, and hard drives. *Traveler* associate photo editor **Krista Rossow** shares her advice for staying sane while traveling.

Move it or lose it. You would never pack valuable cameras in checked baggage, so don't check chargers or other essentials either. (A camera without a charged battery won't do you much good.) Use a mesh packing cube or sack to keep everything organized.

Back it up. Save at least two copies of all files—on memory cards and downloaded onto a laptop, small portable hard drive, or iPad (using a camera connection kit).

Stick to the essentials. Trade a full-size tripod for a sandbag (to steady your camera) or mini-tripod. And always bring your gear manual.

Up your game. The next step in image organization: Invest in editing software such as Lightroom or Aperture. Quick descriptions added to a file's metadata can recall key details, like the Scotch you drank at that tiny pub.



VECHIO/GETTY IMAGES (PHOTO SHOOT); PANASONIC (CAMERA)

A Tale in 10 Frames

Roger Sherman breaks down the elements of a successful travel video in these screen shots from a Paris bakery. "After the first few shots, you can use any of these in no particular order," he says. "Tell your own travel story."



3 A close-up displays apple tarts from overhead.



4 A close-up of bread is seen from a lower angle.



1 An establishing shot gives viewers an overview.



2 A medium shot sets the scene (here, a bakery).



5 A close-up then tilts to the window.



6 An extreme close-up is taken in a slow walk.



7 A medium shot conveys the sensory experience.



8 Another medium shot reveals more atmosphere.



9 Another extreme close-up spotlights a gâteau.



10 A wide shot offers a cue that the film is almost over.

Filming on Location

These days, the most important events are documented on video. For most it's not a royal wedding—it's climbing the pyramids in Guatemala or riding a mule into the Grand Canyon. "The secret to a good video is technique—not technology," says **Roger Sherman**, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author of *Pocket Posh Guide to Great Home Video: Ready, Steady, Shoot*. Here he gives a few pointers for better results.

1. Vary your approach. Mix up wide angles, medium shots, close-ups, and extreme close-ups. When in doubt, go for more close-ups, which better hold an audience's attention.

2. Less is more. You don't have to capture your vacation in real time. Do short shots—six seconds or less.

3. Zooming is death. It's a sure-fire video killer, as it's nearly impossible to hold a zoomed-in shot steady. Instead, slowly walk closer to the object.

4. Don't jerk the camera. If you're going to pan or tilt, move the camera more gently than you'd expect—faster for a panorama, slower for a closer shot. And move toward the energy: Pan from the statue to the fountain.

5. Tell a story. Walk to the fountain; take a shot of the family playing with a baby. Go up to the fountain to get the porpoise spitting water.

6. Hold steady. Grip the camera with both hands,

even if it's a smartphone. Bend your knees slightly.

7. Get closer. Resolution on camera phones can be a problem. Small screens don't show big expanses well, so stay close. Sound is another weak element in all cameras. The closer you are, the better the fidelity.

8. Be patient. Before hitting record, wait for the right light, for that truck to pass, for someone to enter that church to enliven the shot.

Praying to the god of viral videos? Try these video-editing apps instead... **iMOVIE:** Capture, edit, and upload movies to YouTube. Record sound tracks and add photos, titles, and fades. (iPhone only, \$4.99) **CINEMAFX FOR VIDEO:** Play with this app's 55 effects, from the "8mm" and the "dust and scratch" to one that imparts a century-old vintage look. (iPhone only, \$1.99) **VIDEOCAM ILLUSION PRO:** Record with real-time filters (manipulate color, blur or sharpen images). Bonus: No experience necessary. (Android only, \$1.99)

SOLVE EVERY CRISIS

What to do when bad things happen to good travelers



You can't safeguard against every travel upset. But what's the worst move travelers make? They leave home unprepared, says Alex Puig of **International SOS**, a U.S. company offering emergency evacuations. Here's a primer on how to bounce back gracefully from a trip gone awry.

I'VE BEEN ROBBED

One recent survey named Barcelona as the top pickpocketing destination, followed by Rome, Prague, and Madrid. Regardless of your locale, always watch your things when in a new place. Carry a throwaway wallet or decoy purse containing daily cash and old photos but nothing that would make you hesitate to hand it over in a holdup. Keep a credit card and cash in an inside pocket.

1. Hand over the fake wallet.
2. Notify the police.

MY PASSPORT'S GONE

When it comes to your most important carry-on—your passport—practice triple redundancy: Keep a color copy in a safe place (such as your hotel room), leave a copy with someone trusted at home, and scan a copy as an electronic document and store it in “the cloud” (try DropBox or Google's Drive). Copies of the passport ID page, airline tickets, driver's license, and credit cards can



also help verify your identity.

1. Contact your embassy or consulate immediately.
2. Alert your airline and travel insurance company if you need to change your travel plans.

CREDIT CARD: DENIED

Your American credit card may lack a microchip used for security internationally, or your credit card company may cut you off due to its fraud-detection system. Before leaving home, let your credit card company know of your travel plans to ensure the fraud algorithm doesn't shut down your spending power. While you're at it, ask your bank about getting a card with a microchip and PIN number, the type accepted in places such as

Europe. In 2013, most major U.S. credit card companies are moving to a “smart card” system—cards with a microchip and signature.

1. Call the international toll-free number on your credit card.
2. Switch to debit or cash.

IS THAT A RIOT AHEAD?

It may be tempting to lose yourself in a demonstration—especially if it's newsworthy—but resist the urge and avoid the vicinity of strikes, protests, and mobs.

1. Leave the area of the riot as quickly as possible.
2. Do not take photos. A foray into photojournalism could

place you in more danger.

3. Return to your hotel. Or go to the nearest embassy or consulate. If the violence spreads, leave the country.

SCAMMED

From iffy time-shares sold to resort guests to that “special” offer on Thai jewelry, scams have long lured distracted travelers. Beware of pitches made in places frequented by tourists, such as famous landmarks, airports, and train stations.

1. Notify the police.
2. If you used a credit card, dispute the charge.
3. Report the scam online (Facebook, Twitter) to warn others and put the scammers on notice.

WHEN NATURAL DISASTER STRIKES

If you're staying where a disaster such as a tsunami is a possibility, get familiar with warning signs, such as the sirens that warn of an approaching wave.

1. Heed any official warnings.
2. Ask before acting; it may be smarter to stay put than to evacuate (such as during a hurricane, when seeking shelter is often wiser than trying to outrun the storm).
3. Leave the area as soon as it's safe to travel.

THE BEST TACTIC FOR DODGING A BRIBE REQUEST? FEIGNING NAÏVETÉ.

EXTRA!

These apps provide on-the-ground intel, before, during, and after your trip ... **SMART TRAVELER:** The State Department offers updated country info and travel alerts. (iPhone and Android, free) **WORLD LIVE CAMS PRO:** Tune in to 4,000 live webcams to view conditions in real time. (iPhone only, \$0.99) **LIFE360 FAMILY LOCATOR:** Create a private network to keep tabs on the whereabouts of loved ones (or to check in with those back home). Lost kids can hit a panic button that sends location details to parents. (iPhone and Android, free)

DO AS THE LOCALS DO

Navigate the world with understanding and good manners



HELLO

Ni hao (Mandarin)
Marhaba (Arabic)
Hola/Buenos días (Spanish)
Bonjour (French)
Jambo (Swahili)
Assalam-o-Alekum (Urdu)
Zdravstvuyte (Russian)

YES/NO

Shì/Búshì (Mandarin)
Naam/La (Arabic)
Sí/No (Spanish)
Oui/Non (French)
Ndiyo/Hapana (Swahili)
Jee haan/Jee nahin (Urdu)
Da/Net (Russian)

I'M SORRY

Wo hen baoqian (Mandarin)
Ana asef (m.)/Ana asfa (fem.) (Arabic)
Lo siento (Spanish)
Je suis désolé (French)
Samahani/Pole (Swahili)
Maaf kee jeeeye ga (Urdu)
Izvinite (Russian)

HELP

Bangzhù (Mandarin)
Mosaada (Arabic)
Ayúdame (Spanish)
Au secours (French)
Naomba msaada (Swahili)
Madad (Urdu)
Pomogite (Russian)

WHERE IS THE BATHROOM?

Cèsuo zài nali? (Mandarin)
Ayn el hamam? (Arabic)
¿Dónde está el baño? (Spanish)
Où sont les toilettes? (French)
Choo kiko wapi? (Swahili)
Ghusal-khaana kahaan hay? (Urdu)
Gde tualet? (Russian)

THANK YOU

Xièxiè (Mandarin)
Shokran (Arabic)
Gracias (Spanish)
Merci (French)
Asante (Swahili)
Shukria (Urdu)
Spasibo (Russian)

I SPEAK ENGLISH

Wo shuo yingyu (Mandarin)
Ana atkalem Engleezi (Arabic)
Hablo inglés (Spanish)
Je parle anglais (French)
Mimi ninazungumza Kiingereza (Swahili)
Mein angrezi boltaa/boltii hun (Urdu)
Ya govoryu po angliyski (Russian)

Reported by
Jennifer Pocock

Friend or Faux (Pas)?

Taking on the world's customs can jumble a traveler's brain even more than crisscrossing the international date line. That's where cultural consultant **Dean Foster** comes in. An expert at helping business executives negotiate sensitive deals overseas, he distills etiquette for a dozen-plus countries with his latest venture, **CultureGuide apps**. Still, blunders are inevitable, even for the well meaning. That's OK, says Foster: "Delight in the expectation that you will experience things you don't understand. People are generally forgiving of cultural ignorance—you're not one of us, so how could you know?—as long as you're respectful." Fortunately, a few rules are universal.

Avoid offensive hand gestures. The middle finger isn't the only digit that disrespects. The Dutch tap thumbnails together in disgust; the A-OK signal is X-rated in Brazil.

Practice the local greeting. Most Thais prefer the *wai* (palms pressed together as in prayer); the Japanese drop their eyes and bow slightly (below). Muslims don't shake hands with the opposite sex.



To smile or not to smile? Berliners, for one, won't return your grin—it's an expression of superficiality.

Be flexible about space norms. Expect to be elbowed and bumped into on the streets and subways of South Korea.

Learn local body language. Don't point with your index finger in Senegal (instead indicate direction with your chin or tongue) or sit with the soles of your feet aimed at another person in Dubai.

Mind your table manners. In parts of Asia, chopsticks left standing upright in a bowl of rice symbolize death.

Drink as the locals drink. During a toast, Slovaks hold

eye contact from the moment a drink is lifted until it's placed back on the table.

Be aware of fashion statements. In Polynesian cultures such as Hawaii, a flower tucked behind the right ear means you're single (and ready to mingle). Wearing a striped tie in the U.K. may imply membership in an exclusive club or school.

Tip correctly. Tipping is rare in China but widely expected in Latin America, the Middle East, and beyond—from street sweepers in Cape Town to ushers in St. Petersburg.

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IN SEARCH
OF THE
WORLD'S

CLEANER AIR



Tasmania native Helen Schuurin braces against gusts at Cape Grim, where winds arrive unsullied after sweeping across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.



ST

**A QUEST FOR SINGULAR PURITY
LEADS TO A LONELY CLIFF IN TASMANIA**

**by MICHAEL DAVIE
photographs by PALANI MOHAN**

*January blossoms carpet
Bridestowe Lavender
Estate, in northeastern
Tasmania. Opposite: Local
environmentalist Vica
Bayley sizes up a hardwood
heavyweight in the Styx
Valley (top); Cape Grim
claims to produce "the
world's purest bottled
water" (bottom).*





My plane drops below a blanket of clouds and skims wind-scoured Bass Strait, a cold stretch of sea between mainland Australia and its southernmost state, the 26,400-square-mile island of Tasmania. The shoreline appears dark and forbidding against a veil of rain; a sky like dirty sheep's

wool stretches away forever. We make our way toward the far end of the island, then touch down in Hobart, Tasmania's capital, one of the world's most southerly landfalls. I disembark into a gust of warm air and the perfume of eucalyptus. I pause to take in an oddly familiar stand of gum trees. Tasmania was my happy boyhood home, and this is my first time back in 25 years. I've come in part to relieve nostalgia—and to find something exceedingly rare.

My quest came to me when a waiter in Chicago brought me water that had been bottled, according to its label, in Cape Grim, Tasmania, "Home of the World's Cleanest Air and Water." How could anyone make such a claim? The waiter vouched for the water: "It's the sweetest and crispest I've ever tasted." At \$15 a bottle, I think to myself, it had better be.

"Try it," he urged.

"I will," I replied.

I decided right then that I would go straight to the source for my tasting—

and to see if I also could find some of that pure air the label touted.

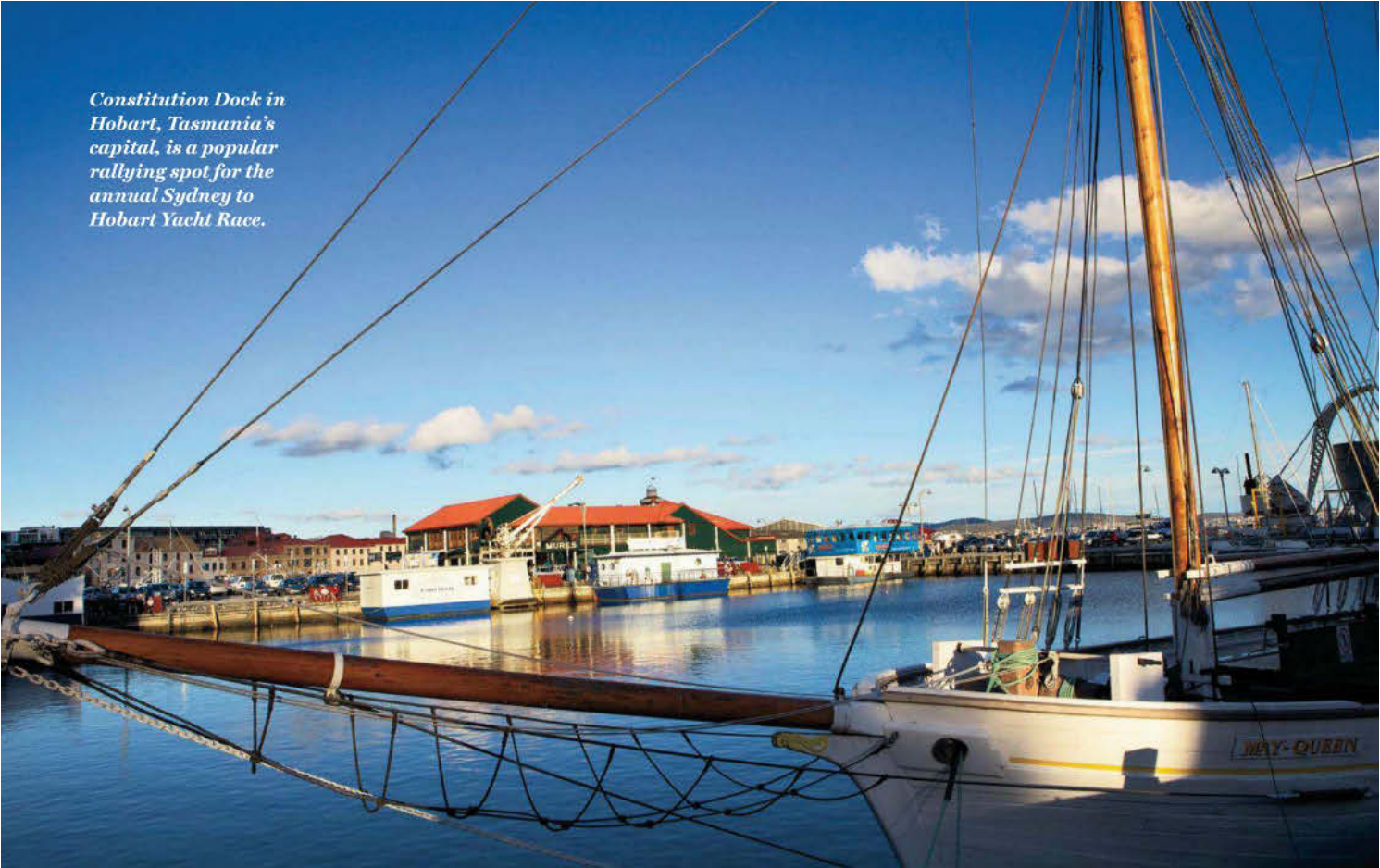
I'd done some research, which supported the claim of Cape Grim's purity: Its atmosphere measures 200 particles per cubic centimeter of air versus tens of thousands of particles measured in major cities. That had settled it. I would go—to breathe free and to revisit the

"Tassie" spirit that had given me so much joy and vitality as a child. My plan was to meander in a generally easterly arc from Hobart and points south, exploring wild coastlines and forests before ending my journey in the far northwest, at Cape Grim, on the very edge of the land. I'd cover roughly 900 miles en route to the world's cleanest air.



AFTER A NIGHT OF RAIN, the morning light in Hobart has a special quality that sharpens the lines and enhances the warmth of its old sandstone buildings. I amble down the alleyways in this city founded in 1803, enjoying the tang of

Constitution Dock in Hobart, Tasmania's capital, is a popular rallying spot for the annual Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.



the sea, and arrive at a harborside esplanade under a bower of century-old poplar trees. I'm in one of the great open-air bazaars, the popular weekend Salamanca Market.

Slim hippie girls flick through racks of vintage clothes. Baskets overflow with apricots and black cherries. I pick up a cucumber as long as my arm; a Vietnamese vegetable vendor chuckles at my astonishment. Nearby, a woman offers samples of cheese soaked in Pinot Grigio. I run my hand over a crate of Jonagold apples—my favorite—then follow the sound of laughter to a rotund man in a red-striped shirt.

"Madam!" he cries at a passerby. "Please have a free taste of my sour bubble-gum licorice. It will make you young again."

Confectioner Peter Terry looks like the right person to answer my big question.

"What, to you, makes Tasmania special?" I ask him.

"Its naturalness," he says without hesitation. "There is a beauty about the people. And this one island has everything mainland Australia offers, all within a 150-mile radius."

I slip between a pair of stalls to watch the busy market scene playing out in front of me. I see an Indonesian woman bend over a rack of herbs and flavorings, inhaling the scents of Tahitian lime, stevia, and French tarragon. A nattily dressed couple busily chatting in British accents wafts by. A Brazilian man with a green string

bag slung over his shoulder dances barefoot to the music of a cello.

I wonder to myself if these folks, like me, are also pursuing a promise found on (or is it in?) a bottle. Although Tasmania has been considered a backwater by some, the world is discovering Australia's largest island.

ONE OF TASMANIA'S SHOWPIECES lies west of Hobart in a place known as the Styx Valley of the Giants. My companion for this leg of the trip is Vica Bayley, a sprightly fellow with spiky red hair who

works for the Wilderness Society. He is bringing me to the Styx Big Tree Reserve, which includes a trail called the Tolkien Track. We pass through pastures dotted with sheep and a town called Plenty that is so small it comes and goes between beats of my heart. We turn off the highway and follow a logging road into the hills, stopping at dusk on the edge of the Styx River. From there we proceed on foot with flashlights. Bayley leads me over fallen tree trunks padded with moss. Huge ferns arc overhead. A bird swoops like a ghost and alights on a branch.

"It's a tawny frogmouth," Bayley whispers. "They're rare to see."

Then Bayley vanishes. Suddenly, he calls out, "In here!" Following his voice, I climb down into darkness. He shines his flashlight, and I see that we're inside the hollow trunk of a giant tree—a space so large that



20 people could swing their arms around without ever touching.

"It gets better," Bayley says, and he's gone again.

I scramble to catch up and then stop. A vast pillar soars through the canopy without tapering, a tree trunk almost as thick 200 feet up as at its base. I whistle in astonishment.

"We call it Gandalf's Staff, after the wizard in *The Lord of the Rings*," Bayley says. "It's a 280-foot-tall *Eucalyptus regnans*, the world's tallest species of hardwood tree." He adds that all of the specimens taller than California's redwoods were logged long ago.

When Tasmania's remaining old-growth giants were subject to logging some years back, activists, including Bayley, protested by living on platforms on the flanks of Gandalf's Staff and in ground camps until the government stepped in. The tallest trees are now protected in a small preserve, but areas nearby are still vulnerable to clear-cutting. Up to 90 percent of the felled trees will end up as wood chip, Bayley tells me, destined to be turned into newsprint and toilet tissue. His mission is to get "high conservation value" forests like these protected in perpetuity.

"This whole forest really is central to your clean air pursuit," he observes.

I HEAD NORTH from Hobart along Tasmania's east coast. Halfway up, I stop in the town of Bicheno, where I meet men who catch "crays," or southern rock lobsters, an important Tasmanian export. A lone lobster fishing vessel, the *Even Stevens*, tugs at its moorings as a kid dangles a line from the jetty. I ask him who owns the boat.

"Me dad," he says. The boy is Connor Bailey, apple-cheeked and earnest. The arrival within minutes of his father, Andrew, kindles an adoring smile from his son.

"As soon as he fit into a life jacket he came to sea with me," Bailey says. "He was three."

We climb onto the boat, and Connor scoops a crayfish out of the wet well. The lobster writhes in his hand, clacking its tail. I ask Connor what he likes best about life at sea. "I have wonderful experiences catching fish and helping my Dad," he answers.

"Yeah, and you get paid loads for doing it," Bailey chimes in. Father and son land up to 50 lobsters a day, the meat fetching an average of \$60 per kilogram (almost \$30 per pound). What will the boy do with all the money that he is earning?

"I have three dreams," he answers—to attend college; to buy his dad a Ferrari; and, one day, to own the fishing boat.

I ask his father what makes these crays so valuable.

"You just couldn't find a cleaner environment," Bailey says. "On a still day you can see down in the water 20 meters." I calculate that to be 65 feet. "Without this cleanliness, the crays wouldn't taste the way they do."

IT'S TIME FOR ME to make my way to the place that lured me here to begin with, Cape Grim. I head inland and west, aiming for Tasmania's northwest coast. Four hours of driving brings me to an expanse of sea fringed with white sand near Montumana. Though it's midsummer here—January—not a soul is on the beaches or surfing the crystal green barrels peeling down the coast. I soon get lost in all the beauty, literally, and spend an hour trying to find my way back to the main road. Disoriented, I pull up to a farmhouse and ask a fellow wearing an undershirt for directions. He signals for me to follow him toward an old shed. I ask his name.

"Poss," he says.

"As in Possum?"

"Yeah, something like that." He grins.

Poss (aka Laurence Good) leads me inside the shed, and my jaw

drops. He has converted the structure into a pub. Not a pokey little wet bar with refrigerator; it's a full-size pub. A blonde mannequin stands at the beer tap.

"That's Monica," Poss says. "She never complains."

A logging saw is nailed to the wall. Hanging from the roof beams are hobnailed boots, a World War I helmet, a blacksmith's bellows. Poss, leaning over the bar with a cigarette dangling from his lips, tells me he sometimes uses the pub for community meetings but mostly it's a place to meet new folks.

"I get the odd lost tourist and end up giving them a feed and shower and a bed for the night. I've got mates from all over: French, Yanks, Swiss, you name it. It's part of the Tassie way, you see. We like meetin' people."

When I decline Poss's offer of a midmorning beer, he hands me a



Laurence "Poss" Good and a mannequin sidekick greet visitors at his private farm pub in the Montumana area of northwestern Tasmania.

can of Sprite. "Better check the use-by date on that, mate," he says. I start to look, then catch his joke; not many of Poss's visitors turn down a beer for soda, even at 10 a.m.

Poss left school at age 12 to cut timber. He says that Tasmania's conservationists and industrialists need to reach a compromise. "Tassie can't survive on tourism alone," he notes. "You'd have to have a coffee shop on every corner."

THE FOLLOWING DAY I'M closing in on Cape Grim. I'm hoping to visit the government's Baseline Air Pollution Station here; it provides baseline clean air samples to labs around the world. But public visits, I discover, aren't allowed. It seems that just a whiff of hair spray or cologne can disturb the station's highly calibrated pollution-detection devices. The officer in charge, Sam Cleland, offers to meet me instead in Smithton, a nearby town where he has an office at a safe distance from the station's sensitive mass spectrometers and gas chromatographs.

Cape Grim was chosen for the air-monitoring station, Cleland explains, because prevailing westerly winds arrive here after an uninterrupted journey of more than 12,000 miles across open ocean.

"Is it really the cleanest air in the world?" I ask.

Cleland qualifies his answer as any good scientist would.

"That's tricky," he says. "I can't measure all the air everywhere



Mirror image: A pond in the Styx Valley of the Giants reflects a stand of eucalyptus trees. Exulting in the fresh air along Tasmania's coast, author Davie leaps across lichen-coated rock formations (right).



at once. But I can say that Cape Grim sets the standard for clean air in the world."

What does that mean for Tasmanians?

"To have a place that's so clean is rare," he says. "We have to be very careful not to spoil it."

Cleland shows me a sealed glass flask holding an air sample bound for the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, where the Cape Grim air will be measured against California air.

"From such comparisons we have learned that some ozone-depleting gases banned in the 1990s are finally declining," Cleland says. "That's great for the planet. On the other hand, we've seen rising levels of carbon dioxide, which is causing global warming."

NOW I'M HANKERING to get to Cape Grim itself, a few miles away. But access is via private land, and I'm not allowed in for another two days. I detour south to the town of Marrawah, where I meet Geoff King, a ruddy fellow with a puff of white hair poking from the neck of his shirt.

"How are you?" I ask, shaking his hand.

"Thriving, mate, thriving," he says.

King, a farmer, has offered to show me a rare spectacle. Before we set off, he lashes a dead wallaby—roadkill—to the trailer hitch of his truck.

"With it we'll lay a scent trail for the devils," he explains. I gag and edge upwind. "Rich, isn't it?" he says with a laugh.

I trail King in my car through the thick bush and onto a plain that is spiked with jagged rock. We stop at a fisherman's shack, where a replica of the skull of a Tasmanian devil sits on a shelf. A big window overlooks a patch of grass. I dump my pack in the shack and follow King outside again.

As we walk, King tells me he scaled back his cattle operation when he learned his land was home to Aboriginal historical sites. He touches a bank of exposed dirt thick with broken shells.

"A midden," he says. "Here the Manegin people left the remains of the shellfish they'd collected along this coast."

I try to picture Tasmania's Aborigines, who lived in isolation for millennia before being driven from their homes—and murdered—by European invaders.

"There's an incredible story in this landscape," King says. "I feel a passion for it, a responsibility."

Back at the shack, King stakes the wallaby carcass to the ground outside the window. He comes inside, reeking, and turns off the lights. In the darkness he tells me how the Tasmanian devil, a marsupial with the strongest bite, pound for pound, of any animal, has been persecuted by farmers.

"I was frightened of them," he says. "They were vermin. But then I became fascinated. I'd come to the shack with a good book and wait for the first crunch of bones." Now King brings wildlife enthusiasts here to raise awareness of the endangered devils' plight. Since 1996, 80 percent of the devil population has been lost to an infectious cancer that causes facial tumors.

I hear a rasping sound outside. King flips a switch, illuminating a black primeval creature—a big male devil we can watch through the window. Looking like a cross between a rat and a feral cat, it burrows its face into the wallaby's belly and gnaws through the backbone.

"They're solitary scavengers, very timid, actually," King says. This devil doesn't look timid, with blood streaming from its teeth. Its ears prick up at a sound in the bush, and it scampers away. A smaller, prettier female takes its place at the carcass, but soon the big boy is back. The devils roar at each other like brawling drunks, then

the female flees. We watch as the male reduces the wallaby to a mash of gray fur.

I'M ON THE FINAL LEG of my journey. Dark clouds march in from the horizon as I pass a turn for Dismal Swamp, a blackwood forest, and another for Footrot Flats. Cape Grim is all that lies ahead, on the farthest edge of northwest Tasmania. At a fork in the road I rendezvous with Helen Schuurung, gray-haired, sharp-eyed, wearing a long cattleman's coat. Schuurung runs tours of Woolnorth, a 50,000-acre farm near the Cape Grim water-collection facilities. She strikes me as a stern character, until she tells me about the tourists who buy bottled air at the farm gift shop.

"How do you bottle air?" I ask.

"You put a label on a bottle," she says dryly. I like her already.

We drive past old stone shearers' quarters and along meadows where dairy cows graze to the rocky headland of Cape Grim itself. I spot the government air-monitoring station—its air intakes and anemometers whirling on the roof—on a bluff half a mile away. Exiting the car, I lean into a fresh wind and push through saltbush and poa grass to the edge of the world. I find black cliffs plunging 300 feet to the Indian Ocean.

"It's a quiet sea today," Schuurung declares.

That's not what I observe. Huge swells rolling in from Antarctica are detonating against the murderous rocks. Spouts of wind-whipped water tear like mini-tornadoes across the waves. Schuurung gives a little skip, as if to take flight, her long jacket dancing on a gust.

"I feel as if I'm a professor in a *Harry Potter* movie," she says. "This place just fills you with the desire to soar."

After a bit she leaves me to explore on my own. This is my chance. I turn my face to the wind, spread my arms, and suck in lungfuls of air—air that has raced more than 12,000 miles around half the globe without touching land, air that I've crossed continents to breathe, the purest air in the whole world. It tastes a little grassy, but I savor it because I feel incomprehensibly lucky to be here and not in Mumbai or Lagos or Manhattan, where the air can choke you. I'm tingling all over. This is one of the great moments of my life.

Then Schuurung appears at my side.

"The wind's blowing from the wrong direction," she drawls. "This breeze is from the north, full of muck from Melbourne."

"This isn't it? This isn't the world's cleanest air?" I ask.

"Not today. You'll have to return when the westerly's blowing."

"Arrghhh," I moan, incredulous and deflated. I sit in the grass and watch the weather fouling. Then I think about karma and wonder if I've worked hard enough to deserve a taste of the supercharged superwind of the great southern oceans. I haven't yet offset the carbon from my flights to Tasmania. Maybe I need to ride my bicycle more and plant a tree occasionally.

The world's cleanest regularly monitored air may have eluded me, but its significance has not. Records from the air-monitoring station show that the cleanest days today are as dirty as the most polluted days of 1976. I think about how we are each a guardian of our environment. I make a pact with myself to do more to help. I send a prayer up on the breeze, a prayer that wisdom will prevail and that one day my kids will breathe the air even cleaner than this.

Filmmaker and journalist **MICHAEL DAVIE** lived in Tasmania before moving to Norfolk Island and, eventually, the United States. Traveler contributing photographer **PALANI MOHAN** is based in Hong Kong.



Carnivore caught in the act: A strong-jawed Tasmanian devil pauses near prey.

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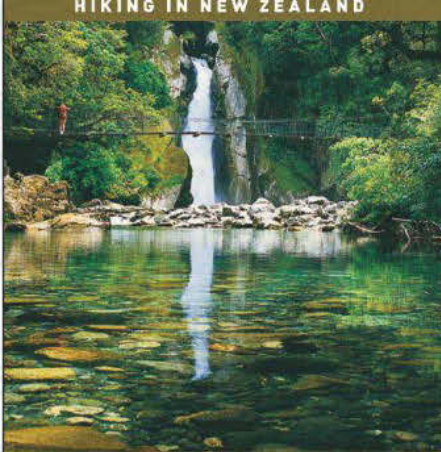
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High Almighty

FUNCTIONING AS RIO DE JANEIRO'S dashboard Jesus, the towering "Cristo Redentor" (Christ the Redeemer) gazes out upon a city celebrated more for the pleasures of its flesh than for the saintliness of its sculptures. Commissioned in 1922, designed by Brazilian Heitor da Silva Costa, and sculpted by Frenchman Paul Landowski, the mammoth statue sits atop Brazil's 2,300-foot Corcovado Mountain. Redeemer became an instant icon in 1931 when a switch was flipped from Rome to bathe the sculpture in inaugural floodlights. Eighty-one years later, fending off vandals and lightning bolts, the soaring Christo still welcomes all with open arms. —ANDREW NELSON

GARDEN OF GOD: Redeemer rises from the tropical foliage of Tijuca National Park. Its wilderness is man-made, however. Clear-cut once, the area was replanted by hand in the 1860s. Today the park is the planet's largest urban forest.

OUTREACH: Planners considered having Jesus hold a globe but chose an image of

Christ extending his hands as a symbol of peace.

ALMS FOR HIS PALMS: The sculpture cost \$250,000, donated by individuals from around Brazil.

DIVINE DECO: Crafted during the height of the art deco movement, Redeemer is the largest sculpture of this style in the world.

GIVE ME FIVE: Even at 130 feet, Redeemer isn't the largest Christ statue in the world. There are at least five taller, including "Cristo de la Concordia" in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and one under construction in Świebodzin, Poland.

TEXT MSG: In 2007 Redeemer was nominated to be one of the "New Seven Wonders of

the World." With the help of millions of Brazilians voting by cellphone, it made the list, beating New York's Statue of Liberty.

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR: Redeemer has enjoyed cameos in several movies, including Bette Davis's *Now Voyager*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious*, and the vampire-themed *Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*. However, Brazilians were offended by 2012, a sci-fi extravaganza in which the sculpture was destroyed.

SAY I DO: In 2006 the Catholic Church declared Redeemer a sanctuary, permitting couples to wed in the chapel at the base.

SIDESTEPPE: Gone are the days when you needed to walk up 220 steps from the summit of Corcovado to reach Redeemer's base. In 2002, escalators and elevators were installed.

 **On Our iPad Edition:** View a 360-degree panorama of Christ the Redeemer.



QUIZZABLE

The core of Redeemer is made out of reinforced concrete, but what stone was used for the outer layers?

- a) quartz b) soapstone
c) granite

Soapstone is composed of talc and is good for sculpture and kitchen countertops.

Answer: B

Christ the Redeemer overlooks Rio de Janeiro and Guanabara Bay.



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